JUDAISM AND THE MODERN MIND

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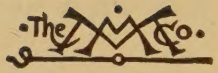

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JUDAISM AND THE MODERN MIND

BY

MAURICE H. FARBRIDGE

New York

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1927

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There are many in our time who have dabbled a little in science, and who are not able to hold both lights, the light of belief in their right hand and the light of knowledge in their left. Since in such men the light of investigation has extinguished the light of belief, the multitude think it dangerous and shrink from it. In Judaism, however knowledge is a duty and it is wrong to reject it.

ABRAHAM IBN DAUD (1110-1180).

A religion that is small enough for the head is too small for the heart and, conversely, one that is large enough for the heart is too large for the head.

A. J. BALFOUR.

In every age and under all conditions the intellects that set before mankind its loftiest beacons of thought and guidance have reached their conclusions by means of the imagination, rather than by the hard and thankless gropings of mere scientific inquiry.

S. PARKES CADMAN.

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PREFACE

The author undertook the preparation of this work on account of his deep conviction that a restatement of the position of traditional Judaism is urgently needed and sought after by many modern thinking Jews of today. Jews of today can be divided roughly into two sections: those who are always testing Judaism with an open mind and barely attain conviction and those who are full of convictions but regard it as sacrilege to examine the foundations on which they are based. The earnest seeker after truth thus often finds himself in the utmost difficulty. He turns to one man and finds no faith, to another and finds no reason. Is this divorce between faith and reason inevitable? Is it impossible for the single heart and open mind to dwell together in unity? This is the problem which is agitating the mind of many modern Jews, and the author of this volume has attempted to provide a solution in these pages in a manner which he trusts will appeal to the thinking Jew of today.

Again, the spiritual future of Jewry is a problem which demands most earnest and careful attention. Is there in traditional Judaism—that great organism and system of life in which the very spirit of Jewish

thought and tradition has come to embody itself—a power of conquest, or simply a conservative instinct? Does it still hide, in the secret complexities of its remarkable traditions and beliefs, capacities for winning adherence, or is its vitality threatened by the germs of a speedy decay? Is its mission henceforth to be limited to a suspicious vigilance over the simple faith of many of its followers, or can we still look forward to its rousing itself from that lethargy into which it seems to be falling? These are some of the difficulties which are agitating the minds of modern thinking Jews.

Many of those who "are at ease in Zion" fear to bring their minds to bear upon their religion, lest their hearts lose their hold upon it. Others again, fascinated by the absorbing nature of intellectual adventure and discovery, drift into a certain dilettantism, and overtaken by the inertia of open-mindedness their convictions become nerveless. Judaism demands a passionate devotion joined with a cool and reasoned confidence, and it is only from a reasoned faith that one can expect the highest devotion. We need to realize that the maximum of man's strength is reached only when the instinctive and the rational are set on one objective, and an essential part of our readjustment to reality must consist in the uniting of these partners, as intellect and intuition are united in creative art. As Evelyn Underhill has so well pointed out, "The noblest music, most satisfying poetry are neither the casual results of

uncriticised inspiration, nor the deliberate fabrications of the brain but are born of perfect fusion of feeling and thought for the greatest and most fruitful minds are those which are rich and active on both levels—so too the spiritual life is only seen in its full worth and splendour when the whole man is subdued to it, and one object satisfies the utmost desires of heart and mind." [1]

Unfortunately, many of the historic bonds—the Sabbath, the dietary laws, and other institutions which have been the means of preserving the sanctity and unity of Jewish life, are losing their hold upon many Jews of today. We are constantly being told that the only means by which Judaism can be preserved is by adapting its ritual and ceremonialism to "the spirit of the times." But in the words of one Jewish preacher, "You may to a certain extent modify the outward form and ritual of your faith; you may correct your historical perspective by a deeper study of the past; you may plead for a due adjustment of the relations between morals and ceremonials, you can never reduce Judaism to a religion of mere convenience, offering a maximum of reward for a minimum of obligation and effort."

The Jew of today needs a new synthesis—a representation of Judaism which conserves all the truths his ancestors learned of old related with all that men have since discovered, and the only solution to the spiritual problems by which we are

[1] *Faith*, p. 10.

confronted is to return to a more spiritual life. Religion demands its poetry and extravagances. If it is purely jejune and arid, it will inevitably fade as a living, sustaining force. We need spiritual enrichment as well as intellectual liberation. Too often the modern man is a prisoner in the thought-forms of his own age, but the really educated man, the true liberal, is the one who is liberated from contemporary prejudices and modes of expression, and who has enough imaginative sympathy to enter into ancient forms of thought as well as into that thought itself. We are simply intellectual provincials if we can understand nothing but contemporary thought.

To reject the ancient formulations of Judaism as is being done by so vast a section of American Jewry is valueless: negations help nobody. Nor can we continue to welter in flabby sentimentalism. As thinking men and women we must gird up the loins of our "modern mind" to express in our way the great truths and experiences which the biblical and the Rabbinic writers expressed definitely in their way, so that Judaism shall not drift upon the rocks of intellectual confusion.

Finally, the author wishes to express his deep sense of gratitude to many kind friends who have favored him with their liberal advice in the preparation of this work for publication. Dr. Cyrus Adler most kindly favored him with many valuable suggestions and criticisms, whilst Dr. Louis Ginz-

berg, the dean of American Jewish scholarship, was good enough to read through the work in manuscript and to offer the fruits of his vast learning and erudition. Dr. B. Revel, learned principal of the Yeshiva College of New York City, also favored the author with various suggestions and criticisms on reading the proofs. The writer spent many pleasant hours in discussing some of the problems touched on in this work with a dear friend, Rabbi Dr. Jacob Kohn, of Temple Anshei Chesed, New York City; whilst Professor A. Marx, Professor Israel Davidson, Professor Hoschander and Rabbi Dr. Elias Solomon also interested themselves in this work and favored him with their advice in many ways. To all he wishes to express his heartfelt gratitude.

If this volume will prove of help in clarifying some of the problems of Judaism to our young men and women, the writer will feel himself more than amply repaid for what has been to him a true labor of love.

MAURICE H. FARBRIDGE.

New York City,
February, 1927.

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So long as there are depths in our natures which the intellect has not plumbed, and shady places where no light of science has penetrated, we are justified in looking to our natures in their wholeness, and to those human or divine hopes and aspirations which, through the long panorama of history, by thorny and uneven paths seem to have led on and upward. These we will still include within the data of our judgments upon life.

H. O. Taylor: *Freedom of the Mind in History.*

JUDAISM AND THE MODERN MIND

CHAPTER I

JUDAISM AND SOME OF ITS MODERN SUBSTITUTES

The modern mind—The tendencies of our age blunt and thwart the appeal which Judaism made to our fathers—Materialism —Agnosticism—The trend of modern thought is to relate theology more and more closely to psychology—Ethical Culture—Rationalism—Different economic systems suggested—The prophetic doctrines of ancient Israel—Varying explanations of the universe by scientists.

THE term "modern mind" is very commonly used in everyday life without an attempt even being made to understand its meaning. To some who use the term very loosely and superficially, the modern mind is the mind which identifies itself with every fad and eccentricity which it may hear of, and is often a mood, a temper, a prejudice, rather than a mind. To others again the modern mind is a mind thoroughly rationalistic, unduly influenced by the dogmatic attitude of many modern scientists and more interested in destroying than in building up. But a careful consideration of the lives and opinions of our greatest modern thinkers shows clearly that the modern mind is less rationalistic and more mystic than is popularly supposed.

The attitude of the mind which is truly "modern" is connected with prominent modern conceptions which are applied to and made fundamental to every aspect of life. It is imbued with the desire and effort to find a new synthesis consistent with the data of critical research, and thus seeks to conform everything of a religious nature in both the natural and spiritual realms, that it may think, act, and worship in accord with the spirit of the twentieth century.

We are told that "where there is a mind, there are order and system, correlation and proportion, a harmonizing of forces, and an interconnection of parts." Thus Professor L. T. Hobhouse, in his work *Mind in Evolution,* writes: "The growth of mind in life is manifested in the wider and more subtle interconnection of what is otherwise separate and even inconsistent. The use of reason is a swelling harmony which gradually subdues discord and uses it to its own ends. To the true rationalism, the supreme reason is no dry pedant, living apart and blighting the free, spontaneous life of impulse, but the animating spirit that impenetrates experience and gives to its otherwise scattered fragments, new and harmonious being."

Similarly, Henry Osborne Taylor, in his *Freedom of the Mind in History,* writes: "For the larger judgments and decisions of life, the final criterion of truth and value lies in the total sum of our experience. Regard must be had to the totality, if not the

wholeness of our natures, in which our faculties are bound together, and either coöperate or act as checks upon each other. The different faculties subtly or palpably affect each other's behaviour, or combine, or dovetail in their contribution to human actions and reactions. Each faculty has a validity of its own and may claim to count in the estimate of human welfare, and in the determination of what is true as well as what is right, for man."

The real modern mind thus realizes that, whilst conceptions of growth, of development, of evolution, and of progress dominate thought today, and we certainly must give these conceptions rein in our search for further knowledge, it is for us to employ all the faculties of man, and all the means of ascertainment and suggestion within our reach. This interconnection between all branches of thought and feeling has been emphasized particularly during the last half century, and one notes especially how all departments of knowledge are becoming an organic unity.[1] In education, for example, there has been a growing obliteration of the sharp dividing line which used to be drawn round each separate department of study. Similarly, in religion, we are told that the modern mind stands fundamentally for "unification of thought," [2] for it is "the same mind that has to think of things secular and of things sacred and the processes of thinking for both are the same.

[1] Gwatkin, *The Knowledge of God,* Vol. II, p. 270.
[2] Dr. Sanday, *The Position of Liberal Theology.*

What are called the 'laws of thought' are applicable alike to both."

Within recent years there has been considerable negligence of, and in some cases even opposition to, traditional Jewish practice and observances, and we are constantly being told that this is due to the fact that traditional Judaism is unacceptable to the modern mind. The traditional Jew may feel that this superficial opposition to his outlook on Jewish thought is merely a phase and that the inability to understand his sacred principles will pass, is perhaps already passing, in the deepening feeling, thought, and culture of the age. Nevertheless, many of us feel that the time has arrived when we can no longer live spiritually from hand to mouth, but must consider whether our religion is in accord with the true modern mind, and must account for ourselves as Jews, and must explain, at least to ourselves if not to humanity at large, our reasons for remaining loyal to our traditional observances and ceremonials.

We are living in a critical age, a fact which whether we deplore or praise necessitates that every branch of knowledge, every system of life, if it is to be assigned some rank in the hierarchy of science, must justify itself by showing the part it plays in the development of human thought and culture. As Jews we have no outward means of maintaining our power such as have the great religions which

are firmly rooted in various parts of the world, and yet, living as we do everywhere, in the minority; persecuted and downtrodden as we are in many parts of the world; disliked almost everywhere, welcomed nowhere, it is only natural that we should ask ourselves whether it is really advisable for us to remain as Jews and whether we should continue to maintain some of those ceremonials and observances which many of us are clamoring to lay aside as "obsolete survivals of a sad past."

But even many of us who wish to remain Jews feel that there are struggling within us two conflicting considerations. On the one hand, we dread stagnation, particularly that form of stagnation which smothers the very root sources of our spiritual life. On the other hand we fear the dangers of advancing at too great a pace. The desire for adherence to the precious heritage of our fathers, the fear of incurring the guilt of leaving the spiritual heritage to which we are bound by our heartstrings, claims us in one direction; in another we feel the desire to attach ourselves to modern ideas and systems of thought so different from those which were known and accepted by our forefathers.

We seem to hear on all sides that traditional Judaism is out of harmony with the "spirit of the times." And it is for us to examine this assertion and consider its meaning. What do our opponents mean by the "spirit of the times?" Do they refer

to the materialism and hedonism which is so characteristic of this age? If so, we have nothing to be ashamed of. Nay, we even glory in the fact that our conception of Judaism is out of harmony with the hedonism of today. But if our opponents mean to imply that our conceptions of Jewish thought are out of harmony with the modern ideas of humanity and progress, then we boldly challenge that assertion.

It is useless for many teachers of traditional Judaism to continue the attitude they have taken hitherto and content themselves with scolding and scorning those who do not agree with their views and practices. Whether we are observant or non-observant Jews, we are all men and women who have to live in the same world, and we are all of us compelled to live by certain instincts and intuitions which we cannot always explain.

In this serious business of life, misunderstanding is a mighty loss, and in order to avoid it we must get deeper than this epigrammatic sparring which has characterized both sides and consider our case with fairness and frankness. The time has gone by for facile apologetic on the one side and contemptuous dismissal on the other. The increasing pressure of common problems in every aspect of life—religion, education, ethics—demands of us a sustained effort to understand one another, and this must be done with the utmost readiness and good will. Let us approach the problem with the hope

that the modern mind, with all its difficulties, is at least no more incapacitated than any other type of mind from accepting traditional Judaism, that its aspirations and tendencies are in favor of establishing the Kingdom of God on earth, although in its intuitions and difficulties it is dimly conscious of defects which are not wholly on one side.

I have referred to the usual superficiality which, in most cases, characterize the so-called modern-mind, and I may be replied to with the argument, "Is not our system of religion equally superficial?" If the modern mind is simply indifferent to religion, is it not because religion is simply indifferent to the modern mind? That the tendencies of our age—whether we describe them as intellectual or instinctive—blunt and thwart the appeal which Judaism made to our fathers, we must all readily admit. Of course religion has always to contend with difficulties. It has to appeal to that side of man which is generally the weakest, and offers something which seems utterly impalpable until that side of his nature awakens in strength. The arguments which it has to use are consciously or unconsciously determined by the weakness of man's spiritual appreciation, with the result that the moment his spiritual nature is touched these very arguments become difficulties. The arguments most successful in winning men in one generation thus become the greatest hindrance to faith in the next. In fact, the peculiar difficulties of our own age may be due in some

cases to this very cause, and therefore traceable not so much to anti-religious bias as to a definite advance in spiritual apprehension.

It is generally agreed that materialism has been slain in the high places of philosophic encounter and its shield vilely cast away, and within recent times especially there has been a remarkable revival of religious sentiment and an increased demand for a spiritual explanation of existence, features of which can be seen in the attractiveness of such doctrines as Theosophy, Christian Science, and Spiritualism.

Nevertheless, we must all admit that in numerous instances there often exists a core of indifference toward the higher spiritual issues and realities with which religion is concerned. Whether this is due in most cases to moral or deliberate rebellion against truth is a matter which cannot be discussed fundamentality in these pages. But we are also aware of the fact that there are many "modern-minded" faithful seekers of the truth who meet with considerable difficulty in their attempts to grasp the fundamentals of traditional Judaism. Their lack of success seems to be due in most instances to their efforts to find the foundations of Jewish thought in everything — hygiene, psycho-analysis, national economy—everything except Judaism. Here lies the cause of their failure.

We are told that our religious leaders can meet the situation only by using terms which the modern mind can understand. But how is this to be done

where the elements which make up that mind are so diverse, confused and independent? Are we not so far from a central appeal and common understanding that we should have to prepare a different apologetic for almost every individual mind? To succeed in such an attempt is of course beyond the bounds of human possibility. But perhaps one method of solving the problem would be for us to consider briefly how far the doctrines which have been propagated amongst certain sections of Jews within recent years as means of supplanting traditional Judaism are acceptable. For, as we have already noted, although the doctrine of materialism has been destroyed, it has been supplanted in many instances by such teachings as Agnosticism, Ethical Culture, Rationalism, and, chiefly amongst a large section of the Jewish working classes, by Socialism. Let us, therefore, proceed to a brief analysis of these doctrines.

The term "agnosticism" was coined by Huxley and adopted by Herbert Spencer for a system of thought which deals exclusively with things that come under our observation, discarding all matters pertaining to the spiritual life of man, such as God, soul, eternity and free will, because they lie outside of our ken and surpass our understanding. Its watchword is, "We know nothing about these things." Now, if this were but an humble admission of the limitations of all human knowledge, we would all be agnostics, for the fact that "no man can see

God and live" is constantly brought home to even the wisest of humanity who realizes the truth of the biblical statement, "Thou canst not by searching find out God. It is as high as Heaven. What canst thou do? It is as deep as the nether world. What canst thou know?" One is reminded also of the words of Joshua ben-Chanania to the Emperor Hadrian: "You cannot look at the sun when shining in full splendor without being dazzled; how can you expect to behold the majestic center of all life and grandeur without being bewildered?" On the other hand, seeing that the human mind, like nature, abhors a vacuum, mortal man has invested certain signs and symbols with concrete forms of life and personality as feeble attempts of his finite mind to grasp the great infinite and to make the invisible world somewhat comprehensive thereby.

The great philosopher Immanuel Kant emphasized that whatever we perceive and know of the world of matter must have come through the medium of the human intellect, to be coined into current forms of perception in order to come within our reach, whilst "the thing itself," that which actually exists and transpires, can never be known. This is the grain of truth in Spencer's agnosticism.

We are even prepared to admit that agnosticism has at times been beneficial to mankind by acting as a necessary restraint upon spiritualistic as well as theological assumptions. Whenever the weird speculations of childlike ages and the unrestrained

flights of faith have distorted a popular belief concerning God, heaven, the soul, and immortality, agnosticism has come forward to temper their presumptuousness and chasten their moods. In so far we are prepared to concede the advantage of agnosticism. As soon, however, as it is formed into a positive system, it becomes mischievous and dangerous.

The person we nowadays meet with, openly describing himself as an agnostic, is usually one who has not even read Herbert Spencer's *First Principles* but is attempting to hide himself under sheer mental laziness. He tells us that he cannot understand our description of the Godhead, the meaning of the term "divine," or the topographic scheme of the next world; nor can he find the meaning of certainty either in science, philosophy, or revelation. The agnostic does not realize that man *does* live by unseen realities and that the seen and visible only mock our deepest needs. As a matter of fact, even Spencer regards the unseen as the more real of the two realms and derives our judgments on the imperfections of the visible and finite from our sense of the invisible and the infinite.

We have realized that the famous saying of Hegel, "The real is the rational," is untrue and needs to be modified. It is the *religious* which is the real. Where do we discover reality? Surely not in mere intellectuality. No! It is in moral faith and adventure that reality is to be discovered. The agnostic needs

to be reminded of Spencer's great saying, that our knowledge of our ignorance is part of our conception of truth. We all have a positive knowledge of the infinite although many of us do not realize it and merely use it to criticize the imperfections of others. How often are we told by various people that they have no knowledge of God; yet the next moment these people may perhaps criticize their neighbor by the standard of an absolute, perfect ideal. True, they do not worship that ideal but they use it to scarify every friend and enemy they have. In other words, the illegitimate use of our sense of the infinite makes us critics instead of religionists.

It is not true that God is unknowable although science cannot scan Him and I cannot even trace Him with my mind. For I find God in my conscience. I find him in the never-silenced voice of duty, telling me "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not." I find Him in truth, justice, kindness, and love, which are the very manifestations of His power and by which His small, silent voice makes itself heard and felt. As I watch the rise and fall of empires and races I recognize at once the power that makes for righteousness. Yea, I know God by the divine life which is in me.

The trend of modern thought is to relate theology more and more closely to psychology, to lay greater emphasis upon the fact that the temple of truth is being built up out of the data of human experience, and that the foundations of that temple must be

sought in the laws that govern the structure of our own mental life. Particularly during the last quarter of a century many psychological terms have been making their way into the vocabulary of religion, and it is being realized more and more that the idea of God which is the central conception of theology is subject to the same law of mental life as are all other ideas, and there is but one science of psychology applicable to it.

We are all agreed that man comes upon the scene of life endowed with a certain number of instincts—inherited tendencies to act in certain ways under certain stimuli. These activities result in consciousness and the consciousness thus acquired makes possible our various emotions. Now, the religious consciousness is infinitely varied in its content, but throughout all its variations it persistently maintains a valuational attitude in relation to what it regards at the moment as vital and ultimate. Its distinguishing feature is thus to be found in its attitude and its end rather than in its content. Not only is it enormously extensive and intensive, but it is also so mobile and complex as to make all mechanical analysis impossible.

The ancient Anatolian dancing around a spear stuck in the ground, the Australian shouting "Daramulum, Daramulum!" Spinoza adoring the "Absolute Infinity," or Isaiah exclaiming "Holy, Holy, Holy!" are merely different representations of the religious instinct in man.

Max Müller finds the origin of all religion in man's innate perception of the universe, and H. R. Marshall writes: "If an appeal to common sense be of any value we do not need to look far for an affirmation of the instinctive nature of religion. I find by questioning that intelligent people very generally reply affirmatively, if asked whether they consider religion to be instinctive; and philosophic writers are also often found taking the same position. . . . Let us assume, in the first place, that a religious instinct exists which, broadly speaking, is developed in all mankind." The point to note, however, is that the religious consciousness is not the expression of one primary instinct but of many instincts all centering around the one passion for the fullness of life. All our inherited tendencies or instincts are dominated by one central impulse—the will to live.

We encounter a "religion" of beauty, a "religion" of science, a "religion" of duty, a "religion" of social enthusiasm, each of which has shaken off the form of all historical religions. What does all this mean but that with life comes also the craving for life—a craving consisting of various values all of which press for organization into one united whole which we call religion. "What men call religion is, at its focal points, a reaction, solemn or joyous, in which the individual or the group concentrates attention upon something so important, that it is, for the consciousness of the moment, life itself . . . so that

wherever men identify themselves with something as their very life, there you almost certainly find 'religion' the descriptive term."

Professor Pratt, in his *Psychology of Religious Belief,* imagines an inhabitant of Mars paying a visit to this planet, and as he travels from one country to another and notices the different customs and habits of the people he would observe one habit particularly present everywhere—the habit of worship. "On leaving America and Europe and pushing his way into Asia and Africa he would gradually say farewell to steam and electricity; the sailboat and the canoe would take the place of the steamship, the horse and the camel would be substituted for the express-train, and the bushman's hut and the hollow tree would replace the skyscraper and the palace; languages and dress, habits of mind and grades of intelligence and of morality would change with a latitude and longitude, but go where he might, in Polynesia no less than in Rome and in New York, he would everywhere be confronted with the same firm belief in some kind of superhuman Being whom one must worship, supplicate and adore." We must also note that if man were to investigate this habit by means of ancient records, he would find that the same phenomenon existed everywhere in the past.

One is often asked why man makes or conceives a God. One may as well ask why man carries on his business or makes his meal; why he makes his

language, his laws, his arts, his sciences, and his morality; why he leaves the simple life and enters upon the strife of modern civilization. There is but one reply which is the ultimate motive in each case. It is man's inherent passion for life and his desire that he might have it more abundantly. "The Alpha and Omega of religion is life." Its mythology is devoted to its elucidation and its ritual was called into being for its safeguarding. The universality of religion is thus due to the universal passion for life.

As life becomes richer and deeper this craving for life, for continuance and expansion, becomes deeper and richer. Sir James G. Fraser, after surveying the beliefs of the lower races, assures us "that it is impossible not to be struck by the strength and, perhaps we may say, the universality of the natural belief in immortality among the savage races of mankind. With them a life after death is not a matter of speculation and conjecture, of hope and fear; it is a practical certainty which the individual as little dreams of doubting as he doubts the reality of his conscious existence." The greatest and most universal of all creeds is the one that life must continue and that death is but an intruder. Even those who on account of some rationalistic reason have given up all belief in individual immortality have been compelled to devise some kind of surrogate in race and cosmic immortality.

The struggle for existence and the passion for life exists amongst gods as amongst men, and it is

only the fittest that survive. In fact, the very hope of man depends upon the war of the gods; for out of that war there will emerge one "that cometh from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah, that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength." In the battle of religions, one religion will overcome and silence the others in proportion as it takes in more of man's life and does more justice to its inherent possibilities. It will produce its credentials in placing man in more permanent relations with the center of all Being, called God, and it will guarantee its own future by the carefulness of its account of the many-sidedness of human life.

This is the reason why the traditional Jew feels that his philosophy of life is bound to win in the end, for to him Judaism is not a religion in the Western sense of the term, but an eternal going-out in search for completeness and wholesness of life. His search for God is, to quote the Hebrew expression, the search for the "fountain of life," and it has come into existence as a means of satisfying his insatiable hunger for life. So long as we purge ourselves of the Philistinism which describes our God as "God of the hills but not of the valleys" and believe wholeheartedly in the entire spirituality of the universe, the earth must belong to religion and particularly to that religion which is most satisfying as a system of life. Hers also must be the kingdom, the power, and the glory. So much for Agnosticism.

So many Jews are turning away nowadays from Judaism to Ethical Culture, and other systems of social philosophy which attempt to construct an ethic which shall be independent of theology, that one feels compelled to spend a few moments in discussing the relationship of religion to morality. In Judaism the worship of God has always been indissolubly bound up with its ethical teachings. In Christianity, faith was the original element, whilst its ethical teachings developed later.

The traditional Jew cannot countenance the religiosity which disregards morality nor the morality which seeks to organize life on a non-supernatural basis. The modern mind often attempts to solve the problem of the relationship between religion and morality by regarding them as one. Here is the source of its error. They are two things and not one, although they are both part of the human consciousness springing from one source. Can we point to any nation which has lived on ethics without a religion? The example one hears referred to constantly is that of the Chinese, but this is entirely untrue; for although Confucius may have been a moralist rather than a theologian, he certainly did not ignore theology altogether. As a matter of fact, we read how on one occasion, in expressing admiration for an inscription on a certain statue, he says: "When you speak, when you act, when you think, you seem alone, unseen, unheard; but the spirits are witnesses of all." The reason why Buddhism and

Christianity have been receiving such warm sympathy in China can only be explained by the fact that the Chinese mind has always found a vacant place within itself to be filled up from without and the Confucian is always more than a Confucian. This in itself is sufficient evidence that a system of morality organized on a non-supernatural basis cannot establish for itself a hold on the masses of the people for any length of time.

We now proceed to discuss the relationship of the two entities—religion and morality—and we ask whether religion created morality or morality created religion. It is true that "as a man so is his God" and that the character of a people's deity depends upon their own morality. Also, when a race advances from the stage of brutality and savagery to that of benevolence and service, its conception of its deity advances similarly. This has suggested to many that religion is the product of morality. Is this really so? How does this advance take place? How do people get the "moral advance" that lifts them into the spirit of love and service? What is the driving power behind our morality that forces it upward from one level to another? Looking at the problem from a purely scientific standpoint, we recognize here at once something different from and deeper than the rules and observances which form an ethic. In other words, we meet with a set of facts in human nature which we call religious. In its leaders particularly history is full of examples

of men who have suddenly been overcome by some sudden vision, trance or spiritual force, and leaving the commonplace lives which they had led hitherto, went out amongst their fellowmen to preach a new doctrine of morality and salvation. The force often appears as a vast emotional movement, an uprush of mysterious powers which work upon man's consciousness with a new overwhelming potency.

The great prophets of Israel and the stories of their conversion supply us with sufficient illustrations of the force of divinity working upon the human emotions. True, this is not morality or ethics in the ordinary definitions of the term, but it certainly reacts on ethics, for it becomes its main driving force. The men who are subject to these experiences are immediately placed on an ethical crusade. They become scrutinizers of conduct and preachers and teachers of the true standards of the conduct of others.

Morality certainly depends upon other sources than religion for its evolution. The economic factors of life, the growth of education, the opening of new communications and means of intercourse between nations, and the change from migratory to settled and sedentary habits are but a few of the active agents which are bringing about a change in the moral status of humanity.

We thus realize that we are not a mere congeries of curious specimens of the world's contents. We are moved within by a divine impulse; all things

with creative energy are brought into movement by us; and this energy is filled with passionate purpose. The world of society must move ever onward, because we passionately will that it shall do so. We do not merely grow; we are determined to create. God so wills it.

We have seen, therefore, that moral inspiration is unconscious religion, and that religion is one part of the human consciousness and morality another—both emanating from one source, forming parts of the world order; expressions of one will, factors working to one and the same end. Here lies the connection between morality and theology. Each, when healthy, is filled with the other; each plays into and then corrects the other. The highest theology is a product of the highest morality, for both form part of the great divine revelation which is working alike in every part of the human soul, indoctrinating it through feeling and through fact into life's central mysteries.

The term "rationalism" has been used in so many different senses that it is exceedingly difficult to define it. By some it has been regarded as a foe to all religion, as an attempt to repudiate the essential basic doctrines of Judaism and Christianity, and to deny the reality of all revelation. But whilst there have been some rationalists who in the name of what they call "reason" attempted to show the absurdity of all religious faith and belief, there have been others whose rationalism was an attempt

to minister to faith by their insistence that the utterances of religion shall harmonize with the canons of thought.

Now the term "rationalist" was first used in the middle of the seventeenth century and applied to certain Christian sects. One may note particularly the two great parallel movements of thought that held the attention of Europe for the greater part of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. One was inaugurated in England by Bacon and Locke and culminated in the scepticism of Hume on the one hand and the philosophic faith of Butler on the other. The other movement was inaugurated on the continent by Descartes. Bacon and Locke attempted to discover the relations of God, man, and nature primarily by one great method—by allowing external nature to speak to the human mind through her facts, independently of all philosophical presuppositions or personal preferences. Religion, they argued, is independent of any special revelation. The only true revelation is that of nature which proclaims the greatness of her Creator. In the words of Addison:

> The spacious firmament on high
> With all the blue ethereal sky
> And Spangled heavens, a shining frame,
> Their great Original proclaim.
>
> In reasoned ear they all rejoice
> And utter forth a glorious voice;
> Forever singing as they shine,
> "The hand that made us is Divine."

Locke tells us that the mind depends for its ideas of God upon the impressions which the external world makes upon our senses. He does not believe in "innate ideas of God or miraculous revelations of the Deity which are not subject to proof." Bacon and Locke soon won for themselves a large following amongst the religious thinkers of the day.

A parallel movement on the continent began with Descartes. He posited God as the ultimate and only real cause or substance. From this substance flow the secondary substances of mind and body, of thought and matter, whose phenomena correspond to each other. Spinoza carried Descartes' position farther and by the same necessity of thought predicated the one self-existent substance, which is God. Finite things are only temporary modes of the divine self-expression and so the whole world is the expression of the divine perfection.

Now, before we proceed to consider the claims of rationalism, let us remember that whilst all men claim to be rational, there are, as Carlyle has pointed out, comparatively few who can make good that claim. To be rational is to be possessed of the power of orderly, consistent thinking, but we must remember that in addition to this power there are other forms of experience, such as feeling and volition, which are almost independent of thought. A rationalist, in general, is one who, whilst recognizing the place for the play of feeling and of will in our nature, seeks to subordinate both to the will of

thought. He tells us that he stands for the supremacy of intellect in man and that he denies what reason cannot comprehend and accept.

The rationalist will only accept those terms which his reason can understand and he tells us that he only uses terms which are quite comprehensible. His favorite saying is "a man must say what he means and mean what he says." Let us now examine this premise. The first clause is an intellectual demand, and the assumption is that any intelligent man can meet it without hesitation. Macaulay once boasted that he had never written a sentence which could be misunderstood by an intelligent man; but how many of us can make such a boast? We are trying to say what we mean but we do not always succeed. In dealing with simple matters where there is no doubt as to the term used there is little difficulty. For example, to say in mathematics that three plus three equals six is to say exactly what one means, because the speaker knows that the words he uses will convey exactly the same meaning to the hearer as is in his own mind. The same applies to a legal document where the two parties to a contract are agreed upon the meanings of the terms used and the obligations arising from the agreement. But in dealing with universals there is no such agreement. God, Beauty, Truth are concepts which cannot be defined; first, because words are incapable of expressing the deep things of the spirit, and secondly because it is

impossible to know how the words spoken by one man will be interpreted by another.

The difficulty in stating plainly what one means is often due to the hearer as well as the speaker. The hearer may have a very simple idea of an exceedingly complex question, and any attempt on the part of the speaker to make plain what he understands may seem to the hearer either unintelligible or disingenuous.

Rationalism has undoubtedly numerous merits. It insists that the truly moral life is natural to man, that the universe is a unit—this world and the next, earth and heaven, are inseparable and are governed by the same law. But rationalism, whilst accurate in aim, is cold and forbidding to the tempted and tried. It may be free from fanaticism and hallucinations, but it lacks inspiration and the spirit of religious enterprise.

Our great danger in this age is that of being satisfied with a mere intellectual interest, in being critical rather than creative, in moving round the center at the distance of the circumference. In fact, the tendency nowadays is for men to realize more and more their need of inspiration and their dependence upon something higher and wiser than themselves; and rationalism, basing its interpretation of religion on assumptions derived from speculation rather than from tradition, cannot arouse deep emotion or enthusiasm in the masses. Rationalism can thus only satisfy the intellectual curiosity of the

few. It is ultimately aristocratic and can never satisfy humanity at large.

We are all aware of the overwhelming influence which the doctrines of socialism have been exerting upon the Jewish masses within recent years and the extent to which the belief in social reform is largely supplanting religious enthusiasm and ardor. Whether it is the socialist who has divorced himself entirely from all aspects of Jewish life or whether it is the Poalei Zionist who is interested only in building up a new type of social system in Palestine, we must admit that the social appeal has very largely replaced the religious enthusiasm which characterized former generations. We are told that it is simply a waste of time to discuss the abstruse problems of theology or to force the claims of worship amidst the unjust and demoralizing conditions by which we are surrounded.

Unfortunately the common means of approach to this problem hitherto has been one of hostility on the part of many traditional Jews. The symptoms of social unrest and of an attempt to supplant faith by social reform have been regarded as the very opposite of religion. Let us now approach these arguments with some measure of understanding and sympathy and perhaps we may succeed in finding here certain religious elements in the main tendencies of the modern mind of which their professors are themselves unconscious—tendencies which are by no means unJewish but which unfortunately

declare an illegitimate halt along a road, which, if followed further, would lead to Judaism in its highest and finest sense.

In order to get at the root sources of the evils of our present economic system, let us commence by considering how the individualism and capitalism which characterize modern life arose. Individualism began to obtain in Northern Europe in the sixteenth century and reached its zenith in the realm of commerce about the year 1800. People began to realize that, if they could sell articles which were both good and cheap, it would "pay" them to do so, for they would succeed in selling more of them. It was advantageous, therefore, to obtain labor as cheaply as possible and to have goods manufactured at the very cheapest rate, so that the cheaper the cost of production, the lower would be the price of the article. In other words, man's selfishness would benefit himself as well as society. This, of course, added to its evils in encouraging competition, particularly in the industrial world between different manufacturers. The evils of this system need not even be touched upon here; we are all well cognizant of them.

Now, later, a new kind of attempt was put forward to solve the problem. It was argued that men ought not to compete. Is it not possible for them to enrich themselves by some other method? And so the era of competition began to give way to a new era, that of "trusts." Of course the competitive

system and the trust system are based upon one principle—how is man to amass most wealth? It is not a question of the best method of serving society. It is merely selfishness—the best method of acquiring wealth. Here lies its fallacy. Whether there is a combine of the masters of a certain trade to exploit their workmen, or of the workmen of that trade to raise unnecessarily the price of labor, or a combination of employers and employed to raise prices against the consumer, the problems of capital and labor will never be solved unless each party approaches them in a deeply religious spirit, in a spirit of meekness and with a readiness to subordinate its own selfish interests to the interests of society as a whole.

We cannot enter here into a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the main economic doctrines which are being propagated at present—Capitalism, Communism, Socialism, and Syndicalism. There are numerous arguments which can be placed in favor of and against each of them. Many seem to think that it is yet too early to judge the results of Communism as following on the Russian Revolution, for although it may have been extreme, future events may teach us that on the whole it was to the advantage of mankind, just as the French Revolution was beneficial to humanity in spite of its terrible excesses, and that before we can pass judgment on the advantages and disadvantages of Communism we must wait for further developments.

But whether we agree with this view or not we must constantly bear in mind that no form of social system can succeed unless it is characterized by a distinctly religious spirit. Our Jewish workingmen have every right to work for that particular system of society which they think would be most advantageous toward bringing about the Kingdom of God on earth. But they must realize that, whether it is one system of society or another, it cannot and will not succeed until men are imbued with a feeling of altruism in their dealings with each other.

The Syndicalism advocated today reminds one in many respects of the medieval trade guilds which perished through the selfishness by which they were characterized—their interest only in the "insider." Similarly, the socialistic state presents numerous difficulties. How will the state enforce a universal service! The finest work is always the work done willingly. An unwilling man can never become a true poet, artist, or teacher. Very few people are willing to do the work which has been selected for them by others, and it is generally agreed that real success in one's work can only be attained when the individual is full of enthusiasm for his task. If the doctrines of Socialism as a means of the reorganization of society are to be successful, they must be imbued with deep spirituality, with feeling on the part of each individual that as a member of society he must sacrifice his own interests to the common weal.

Traditional Judaism, therefore, cannot be and is not hostile to any of the modern schemes propagated by our social thinkers, in so far as these are meant for the amelioration of the social conditions of mankind. Furthermore, we must bear in mind that our rebellion against modern social conditions, and our realization of something entirely different in a society utterly unjust and corrupt, is in itself a case of supernatural inspiration, and evidence of the connection between ourselves and the Infinite. The Jewish socialist must come to realize that so far from interest in social reform being antagonistic to religion, the crude necessities of economics are a final guarantee that, no matter how our present system may be modified, belief in ideals, in religious inspiration, and in the brotherhood of man are doctrines which cannot be dispensed with, for class war and direct action certainly will not bring the communistic state from heaven.

The true social reformer realizes that the root of our present-day social problems is not so much defective social arrangement as sin. If men "knew God" and their lives were rooted in religion, then every relationship of man to man would be controlled by moral considerations, and social problems, whilst they would not altogether disappear, would certainly lose their tragedy and keenness.

Whilst we realize, therefore, the gravity of the problem of capital and labor, and the necessity for its immediate solution, to us the paramount social

problem is everywhere the relation of God to man and of man to God. The man who loves God with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might will, of course, go on to love his neighbor as himself, and inspired with these two motives he, with other like-minded men, will be on the true road to the solution of all the social problems that confront him.

The more we realize the need for a modification of the present system of society, whether it be along the lines of one form of economic system or another, the more do we realize the necessity for a return to a belief in God and the doctrines of brotherhood, coöperation, and social justice as taught by the great prophets of Israel. In other words, Communism, Socialism, and Syndicalism are in themselves religious in so far as they are propagated as means of ameliorating the social conditions of mankind. But their true success can only be brought about by a close coöperation between them and the elevating principles of Judaism.

Judaism does not present us with an easy and simple solution of the problems of individual or social life, as suggested by so many writers. Its function is rather to create an atmosphere, to set all human problems in the light of God's countenance, and to make man realize that it is only by a mind of faith and freedom, unselfishness and humility, that some of the great problems of mankind can be solved.

The recurring references in the Jewish liturgy to the love of God are sufficient evidence of the importance which love takes in Judaism. "With abounding love hast thou loved us, O Lord, our God" is the commencement of one of the prayers of the morning service; and again in the evening service one of the prayers commences with the words, "With everlasting love hast thou loved Thy people, Israel." The author of the Song of Songs, writing of love, says, "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it; if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, he would be utterly contemned." We are told also that the strong man is the one who can turn an enemy into a friend, and last, but not least, one recalls the biblical command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Now, to lead a life of love means to lead a life of selfishness, a life in which one realizes that one is a vital member of a community and as such must share in its activities, ready to sacrifice one's own interest for the sake of the common good.

From the idea of love we proceed to that of justice, for love is the very basis of the Jewish conception of justice. Is there any literature where the idea of justice is more greatly emphasized than in the Bible? "Justice, justice, shalt thou pursue" is the cry of the Mosaic code. "Establish justice in the gate" and "Let justice roll down as water and righteousness as a perpetual stream" are the two exhortations of the great prophet Amos.

A distinguished American judge, referring to the Jewish contributions to civilization, says:

> Israel's idea of justice has taken permanent possession of the human mind. Torn asunder by faction, driven from his country, scattered to the four winds of heaven, scourged up and down the highways of the world, stretched upon the rack, burned at the stake, massacred by the hundred thousand, a wanderer, friendless and homeless through the centuries, despised by the world he was liberating from its idols, Israel has stamped his ideal of justice on the human consciousness itself, and lives in every upward movement of the race. I do not forget what other races have contributed to the common store—Athens and Italy their sense of beauty, Sparta and Rome their love of discipline and order, Gaul and Germany their zeal for liberty, England and America their ever-blessed union of liberty under law. I do not forget what your gifted race has wrought in other ways—in war and statecraft, in music, art, poetry, science, history, philosophy—but, compared with the meaning and majesty of this achievement every other work you have accomplished, every other triumph of every other people, sinks into insignificance. Give up every other claim to the world's gratitude before you surrender this: the world owes its conception of justice to the Jew.

The ideal of the great prophets of Israel might be summed up in one word—brotherhood. As chil-

dren of one God, the people are brothers one of another. The bearing of this simple fact, theoretically admitted by all, is manifold. For example, men who are brethren will not exploit one another—certainly not by foul means, but not even by means that are legally fair. And all kinds of fraudulent practice and commercial dishonesty must therefore disappear. If this fact were borne in mind the person, the property, the honor of every citizen, without regard to his social position, would be respected, and slavery, cruelty and calumny would die a speedy death. The prophetic ideal is that of a society of brothers, living at peace in a fruitful land in comfort and security, dealing with each other in a spirit of love, and serving their God with humility through the faithful discharge of their social obligations.

Judaism thus teaches that if society is to be made better, the men who compose it must be made better. Fundamental improvement can be effected ethically not by a change in environment but by a change in man. It is true that the prophets were the great champions of the poor and that the Bible is the greatest democratic book in the world. But we must remember that the prophets did not merely side with the poor against the rich, but with right against wrong. It was *moral* distinctions, not class distinctions, that mattered to them. We may regard them as great reformers if we wish, but it was the men and not the situation that they sought to reform. "The reformed men could be trusted to reform the situa-

tion and men were reformed in God—by returning to Him."

The world has been constantly trying to escape from the doctrines of righteousness and justice as taught by the great prophets of Israel, but without success. Nietzsche and his school tried to show the way "beyond good and evil," but as a result of this moral madness ten million lamps of life were overturned and extinguished. And now as a result of the Great War and the numerous upheavals throughout the world, mankind is again in a mood to listen to the great prophets whose moral idea is God in history. To quote the words of James Darmesteter:

> In turning towards these prophets Humanity is not retrograding twenty-six centuries; it is they who are twenty-six centuries in advance. The spirit of the prophets is in the modern soul. Righteousness was to them an active force; the idea was converted into a fact before which all other facts paled. The utterances of these old prophets, though most ancient, remain young, and the new age has not found either among its philosophers, its moralists, or its poets, words with a magic equal to theirs; in their speech is concentrated all the greatness of conscience and the ideal. They spread over the future, above the storms of the present, the rainbow of a vast hope—a radiant vision of a better humanity.

Let us now conclude this chapter with a few thoughts on the so-called conflict of science and

religion. It has recently been claimed that science has gradually been driving out religion from her strongholds, and the assertion is even made that the material and moral world can be explained by the concepts of physics and chemistry. We are told that Judaism can no longer be accepted by the modern man, for "the Copernican astronomy has destroyed the view of the cosmos as outlined in the Bible; geology has disproved its cosmogony and view of the age of the earth; and anthropology has similarly confuted its teaching on the age of man." Science and advancing knowledge, we are constantly informed, have given the death-blow to Judaism, and we must either accept one or the other, reconciliation between them being beyond the bounds of possibility.

We shall deal further in the course of this work with the supposed conflict between the Bible and modern science, but let us remember that the so-called conflict between science and religion is not a conflict between the whole region of science nor the whole region of religion, but a conflict on the inevitable border-line, a border between the sea of science and the land of religion, from which only the crumbling shores and a few weakly constructed embankments and jetties of religion have been swept away. The sea remains sea, and the land solid land.

We must bear in mind that the pretended knowledge of many of these so-called "men of science" is ignorance and nothing more. Science tells us the

physical attributes of certain things, but it cannot describe to us the secret of their existence. In the words of one of Balzac's characters, "The scientist may analyze for us a tear and describe it as being composed of gum and water. But is that all that a tear consists of? What about the pain and pity by which these physical ingredients are transformed and the tear becomes what it is?" Science may tell us of God in the material world, but the real witness to Him is the soul's experience in the spiritual sphere.

There is no need for us to suspend our reasoning powers or to ignore the conclusions of modern scientific thinkers in order to believe in a supreme being. Nor is there any need for a man to be a sceptic in order to have the hallmark of culture. We have learned that even science is no longer omniscient. No one recognizes more clearly than the true scientists how little of the universe is known. And they admit themselves the existence of a realm of knowledge which they are powerless to penetrate, a vast world of being which their methods cannot explore and a force behind nature which becomes more mysterious and enigmatic the deeper we penetrate into the knowledge of its attributes.

As a matter of fact, the trend at present is all toward a spiritualistic interpretation of nature. Science has not destroyed any of the great fundamental ideas of Judaism. The barriers between the spiritual and the material, the vital and the non-

vital, still remain, and science rather than destroying tends to confirm the fundamental ideas of our belief —God, the soul, the future life. The leading scientists of the day do not accept the mechanical or chemical explanations of life. Every advance in knowledge enables us to draw a deeper distinction between the spiritual mind and the material brain, between our soul and the corporeal organism which meanwhile it inhabits.

We must also bear in mind that the varying explanations of science are not necessarily truer but only simpler. As progress continues and knowledge develops, the accepted scientific theories are replaced by newer ones. We are gradually beginning to realize that science can describe nature but cannot explain it. For example, there was a time when it was believed by the scientific men of the day that the heavenly bodies rolled in great curves of which the earth was the center. That was the view of Ptolemy, who was a great scientist in his time, and was accepted by many scientists who succeeded him. This view has now been superseded by that of Copernicus and Galileo, who regard the sun as the center of the heavens and the earth and planets as moving round it. We may now say that to our minds the heliocentric theory of Copernicus is simpler than the geocentric theory of Ptolemy, but we have no definite proof that it is truer. There is nothing final in the field of experimental science, and even those "mathematical truths" which were regarded form-

erly by many scientists as ultimate and final are now regarded by many mathematicians as mere "working hypotheses."

We have been taught within recent years that the earth is but an ordinary satellite of a planet which is itself only a star among numberless stars, a mere vanishing point in the illimitable All. But as we realize the smallness of the earth on which we live, do we not also realize the vastness of the universe of which it forms a part and the greatness of the power which brought it into being? Do we not realize that behind all phenomena of life there is a power, an energy, an infinite from which matter and mind proceed, and which is not lower but higher than personality?

Recently Haeckel set out to form a new kind of religion by his semi-materialistic theories of Monism. No outstanding scientist of any school of thought accepts these theories today, and even many of Haeckel's chief authorities, including scholars of such distinction as Wundt, Romanes, Virchow, Du Bois Reymond, deserted him later and not only accepted but actually became themselves staunch advocates of a spiritual interpretation of the universe. In the second edition of his book, *Human and Animal Psychology,* Wundt tells us quite frankly that the theories of Haeckel which he had advocated in the first edition "weighed on him as a kind of crime from which he longed to free himself as soon as possible."

Theologians have very foolishly at times attacked the accepted views of leading scientific thinkers, but scientists have also at times, if not even more often, attacked the views of leading theologians. It was not only the theologians who looked askance on Copernican astronomy or on the theories of evolution when these theories were first propounded, but also the scientists of the day. The mistakes made by theology have also been made by science. We must learn once and for all to "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," unto science the things that are science's, "and unto God the things that are God's."

In literature the world has a heritage with which no other of its possessions can compare in value, for by words, more than by any other form of expression, the mind and heart are revealed and the intellectual and spiritual treasure of the race preserved. Through books we may know the mind of the past and transmit the mind of the present. The greatest book is the Bible and the reason for the place assigned to it is that it contains interpretations of human life, actual and ideal, which reveal man to himself, in his joys and sorrows, his triumphs and his defeats, his aspirations and his possibilities, his relations to other men, and comprehending and enveloping all, his relations to God. The Bible, concerned as it is in its component parts with the revelation of God to man, and the relation of man to God, has held the attention of men because it is true to the truths of life and satisfying to the yearnings of the human spirit.

PENNIMAN: *A Book About the English Bible.*

CHAPTER II

THE GREATNESS OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is the great charter which God gave humanity through Israel—Modern tendency to disparage the God of Israel—The ethics of the Pentateuch—The "tribal" God of Israel——The Bible as literature—The Bible and the social state—The status of womanhood in the Bible—The Bible and kindness to animals.

THE Bible not only holds a unique place in the creative literatures of the world's religions but is one of the basic foundations of Judaism. It is the great charter which God gave humanity through our race. These two sentences summarize the attitude of the Jew toward the Bible. We regard the Bible as a compendium of the literature of a small people, obscure in origin, limited in outlook, but charged with a mission and a message for humanity at large the significance of which has deepened with the lapse of ages and the influence of which is the most far-reaching in the whole world. It is the *vade mecum* of pilgrim man on his journey through time into eternity, dealing, as it does, with the soul of man in relation with the living God. It reveals man to himself as a seeker after God and God in His method of inspiring and educating man. It is a collection of books consisting of a wonderful variety of

literature—poetry and drama, idyll and allegory, record and prophecy. Its galleries of portraits comprise king and beggar, rich and poor, oppressor and slave, dreamer and doer, each unfolding his destiny according to his time. Its central figure is God and its story is that of His work and greatness. We do not go to the Bible to learn science, for science deals with secondary causes only, and in the Bible these have no place; nor do we go to the Bible to learn history in the usually accepted sense of the term, for history deals with events in their purely human aspects.

To us the Bible is a record of God's revealing and redeeming activity in human affairs. It is everywhere in close touch with actual life. It is the harvest of seed divinely sown in the minds of men, the fruitage of the unique national history, the garnered experience of a multitude of saints and sinners. Every vital truth which it contains comes to us bearing the mark of God's action in seeking man and man's in seeking God. He is not a God far off but a living God who has visited and redeemed His people. And just because the record of God's activity—His "marching"—and man's consequent "bestirring himself" is so vividly real, it has an undying interest for both the man of faith and the humanist.

We to whom the Bible is the word of God have no cause to apologise for our attachment to it. We see Israel slowly rising from its early gross-

ness and its crude conception of God. We observe how the Spirit worked like leaven in that uncongenial mass, till it so moralized and spiritualized it that it was possible for a great philosopher to say, "So far as her religion was concerned, Israel among the surrounding peoples seemed like a sober man in the company of drunkards." Set it by the religious literatures of other ancient nations and you will be struck by its purity, its emotional quality, its elevated thought of God, and its combination of a lofty religion and an exalted morality. When we come to that point of view, we are the better prepared to estimate the work which was done by the great outstanding figures in Israel's history. For these were elect spirits, men who had seen God face to face, who had felt on their lips the pressure of the glowing coal from the altar, or whose spirits had been moved as the hand of God grasped them and threw them into the prophetic ecstasy; men whose inner eye had been unveiled that they might penetrate into the secrets of God, and through whose chosen spirits there had come a truer and higher revelation than had come to the people as a whole.

Even in the light of modern scientific criticism the Bible still remains to us the word of God. It is a record of God's own education of His ancient people. We see in it how his spirit struck into the life of the nation and how behind and beneath the literary documents we possess He was creating the soil

in which they were to flower. Scholars in referring to the inspiration of the Bible formerly used to explain it as meaning that the Spirit enlightened the minds of those who were the authors of our biblical literature. But we can now go even further than that. We can see the whole nation and the national history as being in the first instance the object of that divine inspiration.

When we look abroad at the history of the world, we may say that the spirit of God is everywhere present as atmosphere; there is no place so savage and so benighted but where God's light is seeking to do its congenial work. But what is present everywhere as atmosphere is present in the history of Israel as a mighty, rushing wind. We understand how, out of the nation's history which was under the direct leadership and guidance of God's spirit, there arose gradually those institutions in which its religious instinct found its most congenial expression. We see God subduing them to His will, checking them here, driving them onward there, now sending them the sunshine of prosperity, now the drastic discipline of suffering, conducting them by varied processes till they attained that exceedingly high level of religion and morality which has influenced humanity.

If there is to be a revival of interest in Judaism, there must be a revival of interest in the Bible. And it is only by a clear exposition of its moral, ethical, and religious value that we shall succeed in

awakening the slumbering interest in our sacred literature. We must realize that not only our prophets but the Pentateuch itself attained an exceedingly high standard of morality and universalism.

There is a tendency nowadays to regard the Pentateuch as having lost all its religious values and to treat it as being of merely historical significance. We are so often told that the Pentateuch is a gruesome heritage of the past, an unfortunate book of cruelty and law, that it is up to us to examine some of these statements. It is up to us to consider whether the fashion which has recently come into vogue of so thoughtlessly disparaging Israel's invaluable treasure is in any way justifiable. How often is it repeated that the God of Israel is cruel and revengeful, His morality cruel, His teachings and His religion without inwardness, and that they have been superceded by the teaching of "love" in the New Testament.

In order to appreciate the spirit of Pentateuchal ethics, let us take as a typical example the account of the destruction of the two towns, Sodom and Gemorrah, as narrated in the Bible (Gen. xviii). It has become fashionable nowadays for the modern critics to regard the account as a myth, the product of Israel's national imagination, and nothing more. An analysis of the whole account, however, shows how it mirrors the depth of Israel's religious feeling and the greatness of Israel's morality. God does not

select these towns to be destroyed merely for His own pleasure. It is because the neighbors cry to Him and complain of the inhumanity of the inhabitants, their arrogance of wealth, and their mocking hospitality. In other words, it is the sins of the inhabitants of these cities against their fellow men which provoke God to anger. Man was created in the image of God and he who sins against man sins against God and is punished by God. But, furthermore, God is also provoked to anger by their immorality. That the creature formed in the image of God should sink to the level of a beast was simply intolerable to the Hebrew mind. Purity of thought and chastity of life must be maintained at all costs, and under no circumstances can God approve of human bestiality or "modern morality," which glorifies the body at the expense of the soul. God therefore selects Abraham and spares him from the midst of this destruction so that he and his descendants may continue to practice the great principles of equity and justice toward their fellow men: "I have known him to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord to do righteousness and equity (Gen. xviii, 19). This is what the alleged "tribal" God of Israel demanded of Abraham. In the words of Buchler:

> Just as a small number of righteous men should in his [Abraham's] view of God be suf-

ficient to save the lives of all the inhabitants of Sodom, so God is considerate, kind and merciful, ready to spare the life of even the gravest sinner. He is not cruel, not indifferent to prayer, and accepts the intercession of one that approaches Him with far-going requests for the preservation of the doomed lives of others. God, in His inexhaustible mercy, is satisfied with a small number of religious men for granting forgiveness to the whole town of sinners; and it is a telling proof of His great love for His children that He accepts a righteous man as a redeemer of the sins of others. But Abraham's prayer teaches us again that the only way for a mortal to approach God, and the only right attitude befitting man towards the eternal God, is humility. Not in pride at his higher morality did Abraham claim special consideration, nor was he pointing to the merit of his practice of righteousness and equity, nor to his love of peace, nor to the repeated help given by him to the weak and helpless, nor did he remind God that he was His favorite and the only representative of the true God. He referred to none of those undisputed merits, but he supported his daring intercession for the sinners by the declaration that he is merely dust and ashes, and still dare plead for others. Such humility was an example for many an Israelite, and it was at all times the attitude of our great men; and such lowliness descended from them to the spiritual leaders of the

> Pharisees, among them to Hillel, the meek and humble, and they formed the counterpart of the unlovely Pharisee painted in the New Testament. Meekness in the association with fellow men and humility before God constituted the character of Abraham and of Moses, and those qualities inspired genuine inwardness of religion and the unselfish love of mankind. This wealth of moral and religious thought and action in Abraham's intercession is more than sufficient to prove the deliberate disparagement of the religion and the morality of the Pentateuch as being without foundation; and at the same time it urges every Jew of intellect to turn to the Torah as the true guide on the way of permanent morality and religion.

These ancient records that embody for us the basis of our religion are venerable and interesting from every point of view. It is true that their most important aspect is that from which they are considered as the symbols and assurances of divine truth. But in order to realize, however, the greatness of the Bible, we will set aside for the moment the traditional view which has always regarded it as an isolated literature and we will consider it purely as a human work recording the institutions of an ancient Oriental race. We shall then be able to realize that, even when treated purely as human literature, it contains an unsurpassed greatness.

Let us consider it from the following points of

view: (1) Its literary merits; (2) its attitude toward the oppressed, the poor, and the stranger in the social state; (3) its attitude toward womanhood; (4) its attitude toward the animal kingdom.

The Bible as Literature

Israel, like all other ancient races, gave expression to its sentiments by music and dancing. There are frequent references to this in the Bible, and post-biblical Hebrew writers assumed that it was practiced by the patriarchs. The Israelites knew of such instruments as the lyre, the harp, the pipe, the timbrel and tabret, cymbals and castanets. Jubal, "the father of all such as handled the harp and pipe," is one of the forefathers of all mankind. Every occasion of ceremony and rejoicing had its appropriate accompaniment of music. One immediately recalls Laban's reproach to Jacob, saying, "Why didst thou flee secretly and steal away from me; and didst not tell me that I might have sent thee away with mirth and with songs, with tabret and with harp?" In the time of David, when the ark was brought up to Jerusalem, it was accompanied with all kinds of music. To enhance the pleasure at the king's table there was a company of singing men and women. But instrumental music was primarily used for the accompaniment of the song and dance. We can imagine Miriam standing in the center of a chorus and intoning, "Sing ye to God for He hath triumphed gloriously," and the

maidens by whom she is surrounded moving with rhythmic steps to the sound of tambourines, and replying, "Horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea."

It was out of this rhythmic expression, which consisted of measured words accompanied by dancing, that Israelitish literature first originated. As their skill in the manipulation of words increased, narrative overflowed into the wider and more beautiful forms of prose, and song gave way to recitation. Literature is the expression of life and it can only be understood if it is viewed as the outcome of collective and individual experience. In the words of Professor Hudson:

> The literature of a people is not merely a miscellaneous collection of books which happen to have been written in the same tongue or within a given geographical area. It is the progressive revelation, age by age, of such nation's mind and character. An individual writer may vary very greatly from the national type . . . but his genius will still partake of the characteristic spirit of his race, and in any number of representative writers at any time that spirit will be felt as a well-defined quality pervading them all. By this we do not, of course, suggest that all Greeks thought and felt in the same way, that all Hebrews thought and felt in the same way. We simply mean that, when all differences as between man and man have

> been cancelled, there remains in each case a clearly recognized substratum of racial character, a certain broad element common to all Greeks as Greeks and to all Hebrews as Hebrews.

It is an advantage to contrast the complexity of English or American literature with the simplicity which characterizes the narratives of the Hebrews. Tolstoi, in his work *What is Art?* emphasizes this viewpoint and points out that our tastes are becoming more and more sophisticated and we seem to be losing all appreciation of simplicity. He takes the story of Joseph as narrated in the Bible to illustrate his meaning, and points out how, in modern fiction, the reader has to disengage the human elements from the mass of non-essential accretions with which they are burdened. The simple Bible narratives, however, are not encumbered by masses of detail—analysis, description, comment—which according to him are the means of destroying instead of helping the effects of modern narratives. In an interesting passage of one of his works he says:

> I do not know a book which gives in such compact and poetic form every phase of human ideas as the Bible. All the questions which arise out of the manifestations of nature have their answers here; all the original relations of man to man, the family, the state and religion are known for the first time through this book. The power of truth and wisdom in its simple,

> childish form, takes hold of the child's mind with its powerful charm. The Psalms of David influence not only the thought of the child, but he learns to know for the first time the whole fascination of poetry and its inimitable form—purity and strength. Who of us has not wept over the story of Joseph and his brethern, or listened to the story of the shorn Samson with much anxiety and beating of the heart; and who has not received all those other hundreds of noble impressions which we have drawn in as with our mother's milk? I repeat it, without the Bible, the education of the child in the present state of society is impossible.

We are not all prepared to agree with Tolstoi that modern art is all wrong and that ancient art is all right. But we must admit the advantages of the older art as a means of keeping our tastes inspired, and for this course the literature of the Bible provides ample material.

We think of some of the characters of the Bible entirely apart from their religious significance and the interest they have for us as mere literary characters and nothing more—the grave majesty of Abraham, the unsullied purity and high political talent of Joseph, Moses the lawgiver and leader of his people, the graceful piety of the infant Samuel, the wild and frenzied heroism of Saul, the various gifts and graces of the unrivaled "monarch-minstrel," and the splendid pageant of his brilliant

son and successor. We turn from this throng of warriors, priests, and poets and recall the charming apparitions of female grace and heroism. The beauty of Sarah that subdued all hearts even at the brilliant court of Egypt, the touching self-sacrifice of the daughter of Jephtah, the poetical enthusiasm of Miriam, the masculine valor of Deborah, and the far-famed Egyptian bride whose praises are embalmed in the Song of Songs.

Speaking of the Bible purely as literature Huxley says: "By the study of what other book could children be so much humanized and made to feel that each figure in that vast historical procession fills, like themselves, but a momentary space in the interval between two eternities, and earns the blessings and cursings of all time, according to its efforts to do good and hate evil even as they also are earning their payment for their work?"

Hebrew literature has been molded in no small degree by the Hebrew language, and the language of ancient Israel was well adapted to her innate temperament. Her vocabulary was vivid and concrete rather than abstract and pale. The Israelites at a very early period in their history learned the idea of one God and so they fashioned no epic poems such as the Babylonians had in the story of Gilgamesh.

There was current in early Israel a considerable amount of literature consisting of brief poems, popular tales, and narratives. All this was carried

on by professional reciters, passing only as oral tradition, and the art of story-telling was widely cultivated. Later, oral tales were woven into written narratives. In every village group songs were sung and narratives related to celebrate heroic deeds or to rehearse some heightened incident of which their own portion of the countryside was once the scene. The writers of later years thus gathered together their material from the songs and narratives of Israel's lusty manhood in its tribal days.

Poetry is the language of the heart and that style is most appropriate which speaks directly and unaffectedly to the heart. The sphere of cold abstraction is alien to poetry, for its world is one of warm, full-blooded life suffused with glowing imagination and rich in figures of speech, metaphors, similes, and pictures drawn or suggested. Being inspired by feeling it must also throb with feeling, and the touch of passion is one of the truest tests of the feeling which is the very soul of poetry.

Poetry in all its highest departments of sublimity, pathos, and beauty is scattered through the pages of the sacred volume with a profusion which we look for in vain in any other quarter. We need think only of the beautiful pastoral of Ruth, the sublime tragedy of Job, the splendid lyrical effusions of the earlier and later bards, that are scattered like gems over the rich groundwork of the historical and prophetic books, the treasures of thought concentrated in the Proverbs, the impassioned tenderness that breathes through the love-songs of Solomon, finally

and above all the beautiful and inspiring book of Psalms, consisting of a collection of odes unequaled, unapproached, one may say—even in mere literary merit—in any other language; odes before which Pindar and Horace and the modern lyrical poets of highest fame hide their diminished heads; odes which even in the bald imitation of the modern versifiers thrill with delight and exalt with religious rapture.

We think of the lament of David upon the death of Saul and Jonathan as an example. There are few incidents in the course of human affairs more affecting than the fall of a young warrior in battle. Jonathan and David were very dear friends. For Saul, to whom he was indebted in the first instance for his political advancement, although he had later much reason to complain of the groundless jealousy and persecution of the wayward king, David had always cherished the sentiments of gratitude and respect which were natural under such circumstances to his generous and elevated character. The fall of father and son awakens all his emotions and he pours them out with a pure taste and concentrated power that belongs to his style, in perhaps the most touching of all poems

> The beauty of Israel is slain upon the high places
> How are the mighty fallen!
> Tell it not in Gath!
> Publish it not in the streets of Askelon!
> Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no rain nor
> dew upon you!

In general quality Hebrew poetry exhibits to the full the main racial characteristics of the people. It is the poetry of a hot-blooded Eastern people who gave themselves up entirely to the emotion of the moment and poured forth their feelings in songs of contrition, supplication, hope, despair, sorrow, doubt, faith, devotion, passionate love of God, and ferocious hatred of their enemies; hence their frequent extravagances of expression, as when in his excitement the poet describes the "mountains as skipping like rams and the hills like the young of a flock."

We cannot enter here into all the different forms of Hebrew meter, but we may refer to the kina measure, which is perhaps the most interesting of all forms of Hebrew verse. This measure has three stresses in the first line and two in the second, and is used particularly to express grief and sorrow. The Book of Lamentations, as well as other portions of the Bible, are written in the kina measure. The dirges are not the spontaneous outbursts of natural emotions but are rather carefully prepared poems, and the prophet used this measure to create a deep impression.

How doth the city sit solitary,—she that was full of people!
She is become as a widow,—she that was great among the nations!
The princess among the provinces,—she is become tributary.

(Lam. i. 1.)

He hath hewn off in fierceness of anger—all the horn of Israel:
He hath drawn back His right hand—from before the enemy,
And he hath burned up Jacob as a flaming fire,—it devoureth round about.

(Lam. ii. 3.)

The Bible and the Social State

How to steer the ship of society between the Scylla of exorbitant wealth and the Charybdis of abject poverty has been one of the great problems of social legislation from time immemorial. One of the earliest instances of the execution of judgment in Israel is the account given of Moses and Jethro. Moses sits in judgment on his people and the people stand about him from morning till evening. Whenever they have a matter to dispute they come to him and he judges between a man and his neighbor and makes known to them the statutes of God and His laws. Jethro protests that Moses cannot carry so great a burden alone and he suggests that he select from the people God-fearing, truthful men and that he appoint them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, of fifties and tens, to judge the people at all seasons. The smaller matters they will judge themselves and the more difficult ones they will bring to him.

Moses laid the foundation of Hebrew justice and he was at once judge and legislator. All requirements formulated as law were equally of divine

inspiration and decree and it was characteristic of Israel to identify the commandments of God with all law. The Mosaic code of social justice deals in the main with the treatment due to slaves; with crimes punishable by death such as murder, man-stealing, sorcery, smiting a parent; with damage to animals or caused by them and with breach or negligence of trust. We have laws regarding the ownership of land and the practice of farming with its attendant liability to damage of cattle and crops. Similarly, in the giving of evidence the utmost care is to be taken that the witnesses are truthful: "Thou shalt not take up a false report; put not thy hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness . . . keep thee far from a false matter, and the innocent and the righteous, slay thou not" (Ex. xxiii. 1, 7).

As to consideration for the poor, it has rightly been said that while the biblical code is true to the best that is in us, the philanthropy of the Bible is wholesome and vigorous. With inerrant accuracy it draws the line invisible to so many modern reformers between sentiment and sentimentality. It rests not so much on love for the individual as on love for the whole human family. The Mosaic legislation is based on a feeling that poverty could not be altogether eradicated. "The poor man will not cease from the land" (Deut. xv. 11) reads one passage in the Bible, but it is the duty of society to see that he is not made to suffer from unscrupulous com-

petition and selfishness or social ostracism. The Sabbath, the year of release, and the year of Jubilee were therefore introduced so that every man would have full opportunity for bodily rest and moral elevation. The wealthy man must not prove himself a hard master or extortionate creditor. He must admit the poor to his hospitality and leave part of his own crops for him. A kind of tax for the poor was the tithe of the produce of every third year (Deut. xiv. 28). For two years the tithe was to be used for the family festival, but in the third year it was to belong to the Levites, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.

The virtue of charity is everywhere commended. The prophets of a later period emphasize that generosity to the poor is more pleasing to God than ritual observance, and it is included among the characteristics of the worthy woman that she stretcheth out her hand to the poor (Prov. xxxi. 20). The provisions concerning loans without interest were in reality not economic laws but injunctions to generous brotherly assistance to the unfortunate. In Deuteronomy the loan scarcely differs from the gift. It is the opening of the hand to the poor. The well-to-do must lend to the poor according to his needs and the heart of the lender must not be grieved in doing so (Deut. xv. 7-15). In later times when it was brought to the attention of Nehemiah that a shameful condition existed as a result of debt and usury, he passionately called upon the nobles to

remit the loans and was successful in his appeal (Neh. v. 9-12).

The laws dealing with charity in the Mosaic code manifest the deepest and most tender spirit of humanity. No other nation of ancient times made such ample and wise provision for the wants of the poor and for the equality and oneness of the rich and poor. Let us proceed to consider a few more of these laws.

(1) The extreme part of the harvest fields was left unharvested for the poor: "And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleaning of thy harvest" (Lev. xix. 9).

(2) "And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard. Neither shalt thou gather the fallen fruit of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and for the stranger" (Lev. xix. 10). From the Book of Ruth we learn that the poor often lived well on this gleaning which was left for them.

(3) A forgotten sheaf must be left in the field for the gleaners: "When thou cuttest down thy harvest in thy field and hast forgotten a sheaf, thou shalt not turn again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless and for the widow" (Deut. xxiv. 19).

(4) The person passing through a vineyard or a field had the right to eat of its fruit: "When thou comest into thy neighbor's vineyard, thou mayest

eat grapes at thine own pleasure, but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel" (Deut. xxiii. 24, 25).[1]

(5) It was not permissible to keep the pledge of the poor overnight: "And if he be a poor man, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge: thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down" (Deut. xxiv. 12-13). It was a common practice in the East to take pledges for the payment of debt, and this law was almost equivalent to a prohibition of taking a very poor man's pledge. The essentials of life must not be withheld from those needing them.

(6) "No man shall take the nether or upper millstone to pledge; for he taketh a man's life to pledge" (Deut. xxiv. 6). In the East each one had a small handmill upon which he was daily dependent to grind meal to fill the mouths of his wife, and his little ones and himself. That could not be taken for debt; for such "taketh a man's life to pledge."

(7) Thou shalt not take the widow's raiment to pledge" (Deut. xxiv. 17).

(8) The poor were to be assisted by being loaned money without interest. No usury is to be taken of the poor, for it is very difficult for a poor man to pay borrowed money. The interest which is added to it is like a crushing burden, a serpent's bite. It

[1] According to tradition this applied only to a workman in his master's field.

cripples him in all his financial interests. "And if thy brother be waxen poor and his hand faileth with thee, thou shalt then relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger and a sojourner (Lev. xxv. 35-36).

(9) Every Jubilee year, those who lost their lands by debt had them returned to them (Lev. xxv. 25-28).

(10) The poor were to partake of all the entertainments at the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles; also of the Passover. These feasts brought the rich and poor together and helped to cultivate a community of sympathy and interest, keeping the people on an equality. It thus helped to remove all prejudices between rich and poor.

(11) Hired servants must not be defrauded of their wages. Such was God's regard for the poor that they had to be paid their wages at the close of the day (Lev. xix. 13).

It is of interest to note that the Babylonians and Canaanites had codes of social laws similar to the Hebrews. Hammurabi, one of the outstanding figures of Babylonian history, who reigned about 2100 B.C.E., promulgated a code of legislation which in many respects is very similar to the Mosaic code, and more than half of the laws of Exodus are closely analogous to Hammurabi's laws, though with variations in detail. But the Hebrews, after all, molded their laws to suit the Hebraic spirit, and they are characterized by a moral earnestness which is lacking in the Hammurabi code. In ancient times all

law was regarded as the direct expression of God's will, whilst civil ordinances and ritual commands were based on religion and no distinction was made between them. But amongst the Hebrews their high conception of God and His moral nature necessitated that the hard demand of justice should be mollified to pity. The stranger, the widow, and the fatherless must not be oppressed, and even the ox of an enemy that has strayed must be returned.

As soon as the Hebrews came into private ownership of land there arose distinctions between rich and poor. The corruption of justice and the practice of lending money on pledge helped the rich to increase their wealth. Cases in dispute were brought to the priest at the sanctuary, but as the judges now belonged to the aristocracy their judgments were often based in favor of their own class. It also became customary to bring a present to the judge, and this soon came to be a bribe. The commands of the law code, "Thou shalt not wrest the justice of thy poor in his cause"; and "Thou shalt take no gift; for a gift blindeth them that hath sight and perverteth the words of the righteous," were overlooked (Ex. xxiii. 6, 8; Deut. xvi. 19). The perversion of judgment went along with other forms of oppression. The small farmer was taxed most heavily, and the poor having no capital to fall back on in time of distress were compelled to mortgage their land or pledge their personal belongings. In default of payment the security was forfeited and

the borrower or his children were even sold into slavery. The wealthy thus added to their wealth and the poor sank deeper and deeper into despair. Ruthless creditors sold the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes. So little was their religion an influence for justice or mercy that the extortioners laid themselves down beside every altar upon clothes taken in pledge. The masses suffered from the utmost hardships, not the result of the conditions of their labor but of oppression and expropriation; and all kinds of cruel oppression, injustice, extortion, and dishonesty in business are amongst the vices imputed to the rulers. In early times the ethical sense as part of the religious experience had manifested itself in a stern indignation against isolated acts of tyranny. One may refer to such instances as Nathan's denunciation of David (II Sam. xii. 1), Ahijah's protest against Solomon's forced labor for his court and palaces, and Elijah's conduct on the occasion of the murder of Naboth (I Kings xxi. 17-24). But now the development of the court and military aristocracy which changed the earlier simplicity of Hebrew life produced great contrasts of rich and poor. With this came all the evils of oppression, cruelty, bribery, and dishonesty which inevitably belonged to such a state. The outward ceremonials of religion were strictly observed but righteousness between men was forgotten. It was this sudden accentuation of the social contrast in the prosperous reign of Jeroboam II in the North,

and of Uzziah, Jotham and Ahaz in the South, which called for men of passionate and powerful speech who could command the audience of the people, and the situation produced some of the great prophets of Israel. These prophets were not primarily interested in individual acts of tyranny but were moved to prophecy by the ethical conviction that an immediate and fundamental reformation of national life was necessary, and by the feeling of a personal mission to be the spokesmen of a God of righteousness.

The history of religion shows even to the present day that there is no necessary connection between religious emotion and ethical conviction. Men may regard themselves the friends of God and yet be little concerned about their duties to their fellowmen. They somehow think of God as interested in religiosity—sacrifices, prayers, and worship—but entirely unconcerned about social ethics and righteousness. The great prophets of Israel emphasized more than ever before that true religion means the fulfillment of man's duty to man as well as to God. They stood out in their day as the champions of popular rights, as interpreters of the world history, and as projectors of an ideal future social state.

Israel had had prophets for centuries previously, but the great prophets of this period differed in many respects from most of their predecessors. True, there were certain outstanding figures of the type of Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, etc.; but apart from a few

men of this type the popular seers and the professional prophets who preceded the new order answered a specific question usually in a favorable sense. In order to obtain access to the secrets of the issue they depended upon physical means such as the observation of signs, or ecstasy induced by music, but the great prophets of the new order now spoke from their immediate knowledge of God. They were impassioned but not ecstatic; possessed by the spirit of God yet masters of reason. Their thinking was immediately practical and they rested their case on logic and necessity. The new prophets of Israel were men who realized that Israel's purpose in the world was not merely to be a comfortable people but to exemplify the social righteousness which is the counterpart among men of the character of God.

One of the earliest of the great prophets was Amos, who prophesied to the people of the Northern Kingdom. He described the many and heavy sins of the nation, especially of the dominant class. Merchants are dishonest, judges are corrupt; the needy are crushed, unchastity is general; debtors are sold into slavery for a trifling default; and greed, robbery, and violence prevail everywhere at the cost of the poor. But God's perfect justice will exact the merited penalty. He sees God as a Builder standing beside a wall holding a plumb line in His hand, for God says, "I will set a plumb line in the midst of My people Israel; I will not

again pass by them any more." The God of Israel is an exact workman, a God of perfect justice, and His people now tested by the divine plumb line of righteousness is hopelessly out of true and shall be punished. God had been most kind to his people. He had brought them out of Egypt and led them forty years in the wilderness to possess the land of the Amorites, and He gave them prophets to teach them His ways; but all His efforts had been fruitless. The primary things of religion are not sacrifices and offerings but absolute justice.

> Shall horses run upon the rock?
> Will one plough there with oxen?
> That you have turned justice into gall,
> And the fruits of righteousness into wormwood?

The burden of Hosea's teaching is uttered in the entreaty, "O Israel, return unto thy God for thou hast fallen by thy iniquity." To him, Israel's God, as we shall see later, is primarily a god of love and the whole history of Israel is a witness to His gracious kindness: "When Israel was a child I loved him and called my son out of Egypt. I taught Ephraim how to walk; but they knew not that I healed them." The book is a solicitous appeal to the people to turn away from their perfidious priests and teachers with their futile reliance upon blundering diplomacy.

The next prophet, Micah, denounces the absentee landlords who amass great estates at the expense of

the poor and who cast out toiling women and young children from their homes and even strip the garments from unoffending peasants.

> Hear, I pray you, ye heads of Jacob,
> And rulers of the House of Israel,
> Is it not for you to know justice?
> Ye, who hate the good and love the evil,
> Who eat the flesh of my people,
> And flay their skin from off them,
> And break their bones and chop them in pieces.

Isaiah's condemnations are also against the social iniquities practiced by the dominant class, and the lack of justice. He intervened in the politics of the times as critic and mentor and rested his judgment on eternal principles of righteousness. The day will come when a ruler will arise who, acting as supreme judge, will secure that justice for the poor which is so essential for a prosperous and peaceful community. As a result of his strong government there will be universal peace instead of brutish warfare, that has hitherto destroyed all human achievements (xi. 6-9).

Similarly, Jeremiah emphasizes that righteous government alone will never secure the ideal state. It is only by social purification, by writing God's covenant on the hearts of the people, that the state will be reconstructed in righteousness. And his successor, Ezekiel, the priest-prophet of Babylon, lays the utmost stress on individual responsibility for sin and righteousness (xviii).

Jeremiah tells us that as he looks about him he cannot find in the whole of Jerusalem a good man "that doeth justly, that seeketh truth" (v. 1). He feels that it is the supreme duty of the Hebrews to serve God with loyalty utterly disregarding the immoral deities of the heathen, and to live together in mutual justice and love as becomes the servants of the righteous God. During the last siege of Jerusalem when he was thrown into prison as a traitor he spoke of his great hope for the future when a king should reign in Jerusalem who will execute justice and righteousness in the land (xxxiii. 14-16).

Jeremiah believed in a future social state as a result of a socialized people who should passionately desire it. With a wonderful insight, which we greatly need today in our own social endeavors, he saw that this would come about as a result of individual and national regeneration. The inner motive that comes when individual human hearts are stirred in a great enterprise and the social enthusiasm which results from united endeavor were combined in Jeremiah's great expectation of the future: "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah. . . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their hearts will I write it . . . for they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them" (xxxi. 31-34). This is one of the noblest words of prophecy. "Jere-

miah sees men with humble hearts, seeking each to do the will of God as he finds it in his own conscience and thus united together, seeking to organize a society in which justice and truth shall prevail. He has been called a pessimist. His is a faith in the reign of God and the possibilities of humanity that is fundamental evidence of ethical optimism."

Ezekiel's chief contribution to the conception of an ideal social state is to be found in the latter part of his book (xl-xlviii). He looks forward to the day when the state would be one great religious community in which one would be glad to live with his neighbor as becomes the members of a common faith. The priests will teach the people the difference between sacred and profane, holy and common, clean and unclean (xliv. 23). The prince will no more be a tyrant (xlvi. 18). The nobles will remove violence in spoil and execute justice and righteousness, whilst harsh exactions will be abolished (xlv. 9-12). The land will be divided equally amongst all the people and the stranger will share with the home-born (xlvii. 22 f.). In other words, there will be a real theocracy, for the name of the city will be "God is there" (xlviii. 35).

Let us now consider the attitude of the great teachers of Israel toward the stranger. In the Levitical law strangers are divided into two clearly defined classes—*Toshav* and *Ger*. On the one hand there was the Gentile who did not desire permanent settlement in the land. He was known as *Toshav*

and was only received into the social communion of the Jewish people and enjoyed the protection of the civil laws. The *Ger,* however, was also received into the religious communion of the Jewish congregation. Both classes, nevertheless, fully participated in the liberality and warmhearted sympathy of its code. The stranger and sojourner participated in the protection of the cities of refuge, had the full rights to the gleanings of the fields and vineyards, to the spontaneous produce of the fields in the Sabbatical year, and were to be assisted like brothers in their distress.

The stranger is to be accorded the strictest justice in his legal disputes with the Hebrew. "Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, the fatherless and the widow" is one of the imprecations pronounced on Mount Ebal. He was to receive his share of all public and private charities, and of the tithes of all agricultural produce. He was to be admitted to the festive repast connected with all social and religious entertainments, and we read how during the reign of Hezekiah the Passover festival was celebrated by strangers as well as Hebrews from all parts of Palestine. In the Mosaic code there was scarcely any law or form of benevolence which was not applicable to the stranger as well as to the native-born. The Sabbath is extended to the stranger so that he may enjoy the benefit of rest as well as the native (Ex. xxiii. 12), and the fourth commandment of the Decalogue (Ex. xx. 10)

ordained that the stranger in the gate as well as the Israelite cease from all labor. Later we read that the command concerning justice and consideration for the stranger is coupled with the appeal for others who need assistance, such as widows and orphans. The laws dealing with the stranger show indeed a distinct solicitude for those who are without a national bond, isolated and dependent: "Thou shalt not oppress the stranger, for you know the feelings of a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." God, who watches over the welfare of the orphan and widow, loves the stranger and gives him food and raiment. In imitation of this divine example the Israelites are commanded to love the stranger, and the recollection of Hebrew servitude in Egypt is thus used as a means of strengthening that humane sentiment.

One may refer also to the following biblical injunctions dealing with the stranger: (1) "One law and one manner shall be for you and for the stranger that sojourneth with you" (Num. xv. 16).

(2) "And if a stranger sojourn with thee in thy land, thou shalt not vex him, but the stranger that dwelleth with thee shall be as one born among you and thou shalt love him as thyself" (Lev. xix. 33-34).

(3) "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Lev. xix. 18).

What a contrast this biblical command forms to the boasting humanitarianism of the Greeks to whom every non-Greek was a rightless barbarian!

The prayer of consecration at the completion of Solomon's temple entreated that, if a foreigner were to appear within its precincts to pour out his heart to God, his voice would be heard and his supplication granted so that the God of Israel would be known and worshiped by all the nations of the earth (I Kings viii. 41-43). In later times we find a real sentiment of tolerance and religious freedom toward the stranger which calls forth our highest admiration. In Ezekiel there is a command to the stranger to draw away from idolatry, not out of regard for the religious purity of the Hebrews, but for his own sake, because he was to be counted as a citizen of the theocratic community provided he acknowledged God and led a virtuous life.

The Status of Womanhood in the Bible

In all ages there have been earnest questionings in thoughtful minds regarding the true status of woman, and although the problem as to the relation of the sexes agitated the minds of many ancient thinkers, none of them rose to that stage of purity or gave woman that status which she obtained amongst the ancient Hebrews. Let us proceed to consider the status of woman in ancient Israel and compare their moral codes with those of other ancient races.

The attitude of the Hebrews toward chastity and pure moral life are summed up in the words of Leviticus (xviii. 3-5); "After the doings of the

land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their statutes. My judgments shall ye do and my statutes shall you keep to walk therein. I am the Lord, your God. You shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgment, which if a man do, he shall live in them. I am the Lord." Then follows an enumeration of the laws of chastity.

Adultery was most stringently forbidden and punished (Ex. xx. 14), and in the case of wrongdoing on the part of the man, rectification and indemnification were commanded (Ex. xxii. 15-16). Out of the twelve curses in the Book of Deuteronomy, four are directed against this form of vice (Deut. xxvii. 20-23). The Pentateuch contrasts the character of Potiphar's wife—cruel, bold, lustful—with that of Joseph with his fine strain of idealism and moral purity. Josephus who gives a detailed account of the story of Potiphar's wife describes her as having fallen in love with him on account of the beauty of his body and his dexterous management of affairs, and he tells us that when she failed in her design she was most cruel in her revenge. Political honors awaited him if he would only yield to her temptation, for she was the wife of the prime minister of the land, but his resistance and moral purity as a worthy son of Rachel and Jacob and a true grandson of Isaac brought him greater recompense from God.

The daughter of a priest "who played the harlot" and the woman guilty of infanticide were to die by burning or stoning. Similarly, a man who seduced a damsel "in the fields" where she could not summon help was sentenced to die. The law protected a woman against false witness by her husband concerning her chastity. If the charge was true the woman must die by stoning; if the husband had falsified he must pay a heavy fine to the father of the damsel. Whilst marriage was regarded as a religious obligation, the Hebrews knew and emphasized many laws of hygiene in their purification rites. By deed and law the religious leaders thus sought to purify the domestic atmosphere. Not only individuals but whole communities suffered punishment for acts of impurity against their women. And as one instance one need only refer to the story of the people of Shechem, who were made captive, according to the biblical story, for this reason.

The Talmud says that Jerusalem was destroyed on account of the prevalence of unchastity (shamelessness). The Rabbis permited any of the commandments to be transgressed where the preservation of life was necessary except the three pertaining to idolatry, incest, and bloodshed. And it was Israel's hold upon the virtue of chastity more than anything else that made Hellenism, especially of the degenerate Syrian type, repulsive to every earnest Jew.

It is of interest to note how the prophets most sternly condemn every such form of immorality, and their condemnation of this type of iniquity is the most pronounced of their denunciations of the evils which existed in their days (Amos iv. 7; Hosea iv. 2, 13; Isa. lvii. 3, etc.). Idolatory and unchastity are always branded together, and even lack of modesty on the part of Israel's women brings forth the severest condemnation of her prophetic teachers. Isaiah's denunciation of some of the vain women of his day and their apparel would indeed be a lesson to many a woman of today: "Because the daughters of Zion are haughty and walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go and making a tinkling with their feet, therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the heads of the daughters of Zion and God will lay bare their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away the beauty of their anklets, and the cauls, and the crescents and the pendants and the bracelets and the mufflers, and the head tire, and the ankle-chains and the sashes and the perfume-boxes and the amulets, the rings and the nose-jewels; the festival-robes and the mantles and the shawls and the satchels; the hand-mirrors and the fine linen and the turbans and the veils."

The great prophet Hosea, burdened with a sense of his people's sin, felt himself called upon by God to marry a lewd woman, and so the story of his

life is made to symbolize the necessity for purity and chastity by his example of clean living and holy thinking. The bitter experiences of the prophet's life teach him the meaning of the fruits of impurity. We can imagine from the account he gives in his book of the manner in which he appeared one day before a huge throng in the market-place, and there whilst the crowds were engaged in chattering about the latest sensations in the town, this cultured soul, standing on an improvised platform, begins a sermon with a text based upon an old Semitic belief that God was a sort of husband to his people. He tells his hearers the story of his wretched life and broken home, how he married a girl supposed to be pure, how the gossip in the town as to the suspicions about her finally reached his ears and he therefore named his second child "Unpitied," and when the third child came and he confirmed for himself the truth of all this gossip he called it "Not my people."

His wife gradually sank deeper into the mire, but in spite of all this he would not neglect her and finally brought her back out of the depth of shame. He then compares his own bitter experiences with his wife to the relationship of God to Israel. He says: "You, Israel, have been unfaithful to God just as my wife was unfaithful to me. And just as my love would not let me turn her loose, so has God's undying passion for you kept you through all the years of shameless debauchery.

From the anguish of a broken-hearted husband I have felt my way to a broken-hearted God. I now realize that God was leading me through these bitter experiences to give me a message to you. My love for my wife was unabated in spite of her faithlessness and I followed her to the end of her bitter shame with a boundless passionate devotion of a wounded soul. Similarly, God whose love never fails has been following you, O Israel, to the very limits of the world."

The romantic poetry of the Song of Songs shows that even under the coarse form which it took in Oriental life, love came to signify amongst the Hebrews a high, human relationship. And although it does not deal directly with any social problem but consists of a number of lyrics in thoroughly Oriental style, it makes a valuable addition to a great, everlasting theme—the purity, sweetness, and glory of love. The book is a portrayal of wedding customs amongst the Hebrew and other Oriental races, and we have a description of the love-songs and the gaiety and delight which accompanies true love-making in the East, but we have here also the sincere pledge of loyalty of the wife to her beloved.

Set me as a seal upon thy heart,
As a seal upon thy arm:
For love is strong as death,
Jealousy is cruel as sheol;
The flashes thereof are flashes of fire,
A very flame of God.

Many waters cannot quench love,
Neither can the floods drown it.
If a man would give all the substance of his house for love,
He would utterly be contemned.
(Song of Songs, viii. 6, 7.)

We have already noted how the Hebrews extended their respect for womanhood by showing practical sympathy for the widow in her sad life of loneliness and danger. On no account must the widow be wronged, for God is a father of the fatherless and the judge of the widows. The state was to provide for the care of widows in cases where they lacked financial means. "Seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow" is the fine exhortation of Isaiah.

The wife exercised an important influence in her home. She appears to have taken a part in family affairs and even to have enjoyed a considerable amount of independence. For instance, she entertains the guests at her own desire (II Kings iv. 8) in the absence of her husband and sometimes even in defiance of his wishes (I Sam. xxv. 14). She disposes of her child by a vow without any reference to her husband (I Sam. i. 24); she consults with him as to the marriage of her children (Gen. xxvii. 46); and occasionally she criticizes the conduct of her husband in terms of great severity (I Sam. xxv. 2; II Sam. vi. 20).

The early chapters of Genesis, particularly, place

the highest kind of estimate upon woman. We read that from the crudest form of animal life the creator proceeded to the highest in the animal creation. Each succeeding creation is higher than the previous. Adam appears as higher than the beast. But the crown creation is not in him but in woman. To quote the words of one biblical scholar, "If man is the head, she is the crown—a crown to her husband, the crown of the visible creation. The man was dust refined, but woman was dust doubly refined—one removed further from the earth." We are told most beautifully "that woman was taken out of man, not out of his head to top him, nor out of his feet to be trampled under foot; but one of his side to be equal to him, under his arm to be protected and near his heart to be beloved."

The Bible presents man in the image of God, but in placing woman as the crown of creation it places her as his brighter image. Some of the most beautiful, touching, and tender portions of the Bible deal with woman. The tender history of the care of Moses' mother for him; the tender care of Pharaoh's daughter for the infant Moses; the tender history of Naomi and Ruth; the tender account of Hannah and the young infant Samuel—all present the Bible as a green spot in the desert when compared to the manner in which woman is represented in other Oriental literatures.

Women are spoken of in the Bible as holding positions of eminence, and there were the prophetesses

Miriam, Deborah, Huldah. The advice of others was sought in emergencies. They took their part in public matters and appear especially as the "better half" of man. "Whoever findeth a wife findeth a good thing and obtaineth favor of the Lord" (Prov. xviii. 22). Houses and riches a father can give; but a prudent wife is from the Lord (Prov. xix. 14). Touching is the record of the patriarch Abraham mourning the death of Sarah, the wife of his youth and companion in the trials and toils of his pilgrimage: "Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her." The poor old man, broken in heart, "a stranger and sojourner," left alone with no place to bury the dead, and Abraham stood up before his dead and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying, "I am a stranger and a sojourner with you. Give me a possession of a burying place with you that I may bury my dead from before me" (Gen. xxiii. 1-20).

We have now to consider the status of womanhood and of morality amongst the Canaanites and other peoples into whose environment Israel was brought, and we at once realize the outstanding greatness and purity of the religious leaders and teachers of Israel.

When the tribes of Israel conquered the Canaanites and took possession of their land they secured a national home in the midst of a kindred Semitic people, well advanced in civilization but morally corrupt and decadent. For a long time it was a ques-

tion whether the Hebrews would be overwhelmed by the besetting temptations of their neighbors. The Canaanites saw no harm in things which the pure-minded Hebrew deemed infamous. They not only did not condemn revolting vices but even justified them, and went as far as to concentrate them as elements in the worship of Baal, the god of fruitfulness, and Astarte, the goddess of sexual love. The presence in ancient shrines of men and women who sought oneness with nature by imitating in a wild ritual of sensuality all the convulsions of her mysterious life was based on the naïve belief that these practices tended to fertility wherever the nature gods exercised their power—in field and in vineyard, home and fold. The more the priests fed the mind of the people with this sensuous mysticism, the more the shrines were frequented and the revenues increased; whilst on every high hill and under every green tree God's holy image in man and woman was desecrated.

These practices were before the eyes of the Israelites, while they learned from the Canaanites not only the arts of tilling and planting, sewing and reaping, but the ways of winning the favor of the unseen givers of fertility, until for many of them, as for all the old inhabitants, the land flowing with milk and honey was haunted by gods and lords who taught their worshipers to revel in impurity.

In Babylonia we hear of the mysterious rites which were employed in connection with certain

practices in the temples to symbolize the fertility for which the goddess Ishtar stood, and we read in Herodotus (i. 199) about the obscenities connected with this form of worship.

Enough has been said of the low status of woman and of the lack of consideration for the weaker sex amongst the neighbors of the Hebrews to make clear the unique purity of the Hebrew teachers and legislators in this respect. Let us bear in mind that the status of woman today is due to the Hebrew legislators who commenced by raising woman from her Oriental degradation and who, by their ethical doctrines and moral purity, elevated her status to the stage at which Christianity was able to spread these doctrines throughout the world.

Can the modern mind conceive of a finer analysis of the true character of womanhood as the ideal home-maker than the one beautifully portrayed in the Bible? The woman who is possessed of the very finest qualities as wife and mother, who is efficient and far-sighted, industrious and helpful, a loyal wife, a religious influence in home and community, a generous mistress and benefactress bestowing honor upon her husband and care on her children, is the woman blessed of God.

A woman of worth who can find?
For her price is far above rubies
The heart of her husband trusteth in her,
And he shall have no lack of gain.
She doeth him good and not evil

All the days of her life.
She seeketh wool and flax,
And worketh willingly with her hands.
She is like the merchant-ships,
She bringeth her food from afar.
She ariseth also while it is yet night,
And setteth forth provision for her household,
And their portion for her maidens.

She considereth a field, and buyeth it:
With the fruit of her hands
She planteth a vineyard.
She girdeth her loins with strength,
And maketh strong her arms.
She perceiveth that her merchandise is good:
Her lamp goeth not out in the day.
She putteth her hands to the distaff,
And her hands hold the spindle.
She stretcheth her hands to the poor;
Yea, she putteth forth her hands to the needy.

She is not afraid of the snow,
For all her household are clothed with scarlet.
She maketh for herself coverings of tapestry,
Her clothing is fine linen and purple.

Her husband is known in the gates,
When he sitteth among the elders of the land.
She maketh linen garments and selleth them,
And delivereth girdles unto the merchants.
Strength and majesty are her clothing,
And she laugheth at the time to come.
She openeth her mouth with wisdom,
The law of lovingkindness is on her tongue.
She looketh well to the ways of her household,
And eateth not the bread of idleness.

Her children rise up and call her happy;
Her husband also, and he praiseth her, saying:
"Many daughters have done worthily, but thou excellest them all."
Favor is false, and beauty is vain:
But a woman that feareth the Lord
She shall be praised.
Give her of the fruit of her hands;
And let her works praise her in the gates.

(Proverbs xxxi.)

The Bible and Kindness to Animals

The Hebrews placed domestic animals under the sparing protection and care of the law. The mouth of the threshing-ox is not to be muzzled (Deut. xxv. 4); on the Sabbath cattle also are given rest (Ex. xxiii. 11). The tenderness attached to animals which shows itself in the command to which we have just referred—not to muzzle the ox that treads out the corn—or in the command to yoke together the ox and the ass, is one of the most beautiful features of the Bible. One is also reminded of the law forbidding men to take a parent bird that was sitting on its young or on its eggs (Deut. xxii. 6-7). Let us compare these biblical provisions for animals with the cruelties to animals in gladiatorial exhibitions of civilized Greece, Rome and Spain, and note how outstanding is the biblical regard for every form of living creature.

Our analysis of the main teachings of the Bible has shown us some of the great elements in its

permanence. Human nature must change entirely before it ceases to need this literature. That it "finds us" as no other literature does is to Coleridge one proof of its divine origin. With what marvelous persistence does it foster and encourage the best that is in us! It bids us admire the most admirable; cherish within us the hope of immortality; and rejoice in the love of God that passeth knowledge. Where else shall the reformer listen to to such passionate pleas on behalf of the poor and the outcast and the oppressed as burn on the lips of the Hebrew prophet? Where, as in this literature, can you find the power which can make mercy temper justice in the administration of the law? The truest feelings in our human nature respond to the spirit of the Bible. We cannot help noting that the Bible still responds to the deepest that is within us. In the craving of the soul for pardon and peace, light and leading, the Bible assures as does no other literature. Another man must be created before we need another Bible. Our conclusion is one and one only. The Bible must occupy a place in every Jewish home. Biblical exposition must regain its ascendancy in the pulpit. Bible reading must again be the rule and not the exception in our pews. The Bible itself must be the basis of devout and earnest and intelligent study, and it must become once again the choicest heritage of our race.

We have discussed some of the fundamental aspects of the Bible broadly and without qualifica-

tion. But whilst its appeal to the heart is simple, its challenge to the intellect is complex. The perennial question for devout minds has been how to understand the Bible, and probably more earnest study has been expended upon it than on any other literature that has ever been presented to civilized man. It is our task in the course of the following chapters to consider the attitude of the Jew toward the Bible in the light of modern scientific knowledge and critical scholarship.

The way to take the Bible seriously is to understand that those who wrote it were dealing with problems that we have to deal with now. They were men like ourselves, not angels, not mere savages; they were in a state neither of invincible ignorance nor of invincible omniscience. They were not utterly right or utterly perverse. You cannot see the immense value, beauty, truth, passion of the Bible unless you rid your mind of all those preconceptions that will destroy its alertness. It is not that you mean to be critical; critical, that is, of other people's ideas about the Bible. What you need is to take it so seriously as to forget other people's ideas about it; to see it as the work of men who really were laboring to say something; and to try yourself, without prejudice, to understand what they were laboring to say.

CLUTTON BROCK: *Essays on Religion.*

CHAPTER III

BIBLE DIFFICULTIES—MORAL AND SCIENTIFIC

The Bible permits customs and usages which would not be sanctioned by the modern mind—It is often attacked by many people on its ethical side—God no more forces an immediately moral enlightenment upon an existing age than he instantaneously imparts a particular character to an individual—The cruelties of the ancient Hebrews—Character of David—Language of the imprecatory Psalms—Polygamy in the Bible—The Bible and modern science—Literalism of the Western mind—Early chapters of Genesis.

We shall proceed to consider some of the so-called difficulties of the Bible—the difficulties concerning its morality, the difficulties concerning its science. The student of the Bible is often confronted with perplexity when many of its utterances are attacked as being below the level of the conscience of the modern mind, and there are many Jews whose faith in God and in Judaism has been thereby profoundly disturbed. They have noticed that the Bible permits customs and usages which would not be sanctioned by the modern mind of today, and they have found sentiments expressed in some of its books which they feel could not be approved by an all-wise, just God. They have found defects in the idea of duty as

measured by a later standard, customs and institutions which our conscience would not tolerate, and non-recognition of principles of conduct which to most of us seem self-evident. The modern mind is surprised that the Mosaic legislation should have permited slavery and polygamy, that a person of the type of David should be described as a deeply religious man (in spite of his moral sin, the curses he invoked on his enemies, and his prayers for their destruction), that the command to exterminate the Canaanites is represented as coming directly from God, and that the Hebrews are even reproved for not executing it with sufficient thoroughness. This implication of God in the "lower morality" has caused difficulty to many a Jewish student of the Bible who has felt that the morality prescribed by God must be one and the same throughout, and that if the Bible is an inspired book the standard of its morality ought to be throughout of the very highest order.

The Bible has often been attacked, therefore, by many people on its ethical side and the character of the God of Israel vehemently assailed. Nietzsche spoke of the God of Israel as the arch-misleader of the human race whose morality is a morality for slaves, and Blatchford in his *Heroes of the Bible* expresses astonishment that such men as Moses and David should be glorified by men and women of to-day. But even writers from whom we would expect more than mere superficial knowledge of the

Bible tell us "that the Hebrews were bound by moral obligation and the sanction of religion in their dealings with one another but were entirely free of these in their dealings with foreigners." Any reader of the Pentateuch who is not biased by misconception or deliberate desire for perversion is bound to note from the first few chapters of Genesis how untrue such a statement is.

Nevertheless, we must admit that such practices as slavery, polygamy, and blood-revenge as permitted to exist by the Bible writers are wrong, and this must have been God's judgment on them at all times. If so, how does this affect our belief in the divine inspiration of the Bible?

A closer examination of the whole problem shows us, however, that a deeper study of the Bible soon causes these difficulties to disappear, if only regarded from the right point of view. In the first place, we must remember that Judaism and Jewish ethics, whilst based on the Bible, have passed through a process of development. They are the result of one, continuous unfolding of the spirit of God through the Jewish people. If we regard the world as a great school from which God gradually selected Israel in order to teach humanity, morality and ethics, then the Bible is but one process in the unfolding of the spirit of God in Israel, and the Rabbinic and later Jewish writings are others. The race in its process of development and education is like the individual. Every race like every individual has a capacity for

continual development. The human race can therefore be compared to a colossal man whose life continues for thousands of years. The successive generations of men are days in this man's life. The doctrines and creeds are his thoughts, the discoveries and inventions his works, and the states of society his manners. And just as in the process of teaching a child we must commence with the letters of the alphabet and gradually lead it onward, so in the education of a race we must commence with systems and practices of a comparatively low order and gradually advance upward.

How unfair it is to describe the God of the Hebrew Bible as a capricious, cruel, and revengeful Being, as is so often done! It is true that here and there some of God's ways in dealing with man as represented in the Bible may seem incomprehensible to us. But if institutions were permitted to exist by the great teachers of Israel which to us seem degrading, this is merely due to the fact that the Hebrews in spite of their religious genius were, after all, children of the age. In the words of one great teacher, "God no more forces an immediately moral enlightenment upon an existing age than he instantaneously imparts a particular character to an individual. He has endowed man with intellectual faculties of a certain kind, which move in a certain way and with a gradual progressive motion requiring time . . . the natural motion of a human understanding is by steps and stages; one after another it

is weary, sinks back exhausted, and cannot go farther just then, but rests, and there is a pause in the progress until another impulse comes. And thus the work is accomplished gradually and some large and complete truth is at last arrived at."

Suppose a judicious man appointed at the head of a body of semi-civilized Australian aborigines attempted to reveal to these poor creatures the higher aspects of life. He would try to teach the ideas of self-sacrifice, love of one's enemies, chivalrous reverence for women and consecration of one's life to God. But he would find that as the result of their previous modes of life—the drunkenness and impurity, the murder and revenge to which they have been accustomed—it would be exceedingly difficult for them to appreciate even some of the things which are so apparent to himself. If he will only succeed in impressing upon them the sinfulness of the most wicked things to which they have been accustomed, he will consider himself as in some degree successful. And if he is a wise, judicious man he will overlook much that grieves him and will tolerate for the time being many things of which he really disapproves.

The words of Mozley, in his work *Ruling Ideas in Early Ages,* are of particular interest in this respect: "When you talk of the imperfect and mistaken morality of the Old Testament, ask yourself to begin with what you mean and what you intend to assert by the expression. Do you mean to assert

that the written law was imperfect? If that is all, you state what is simply a fact; but this does not touch the morality of the Lawgiver, because he is abundantly fortified by the defence that He could give no higher morality at the time to an unenlightened people. Do you mean to assert that the scope and design was imperfectly moral? In that case you were contradicted by the whole course of history. You blame in the God of the Bible what? The moral standard He permits? It is the highest man could then receive. The moral standard He desires? He desires a perfect moral standard and ultimately establishes it."

Historical revelation cannot at a stroke annihilate existing conditions and create a world of new ones. Revelation can only work in accordance with the laws of historical development. "Revelation takes up man as it finds him and does one thing at once—implants a truth, constitutes a relation, establishes a principle—which may have a whole rich content implicit in it, but it cannot convey to the recipient from the first a full all-round apprehension of everything which the principle involves." Revelation must obviously begin somewhere and so it works patiently in accordance with the laws of historical development. It has to content itself in introducing new ideas and gradually overcoming and eliminating what is most objectionable; it has to content itself with bearing patiently with con-

siderable evil, and replace the old whilst the good which it implants has time to grow and develop.

Let us note further, however, that there are numerous instances of Bible narratives which seem difficult at first reading but are quite comprehensible when interpreted in the full light of history. The consideration of a few instances of this type will here suffice.

The treatment of the Canaanites by the Hebrews and their utter extirpation is regarded by many people as cruelty of the very worst type. One can quite understand this attitude when the subject is looked upon from one point of view. But when regarded with an unbiased mind in the fuller light of history, one cannot help feeling that it may have been an eternal necessity that a nation such as the great majority of the Canaanites then were, sinking deeper and deeper into a slough of moral perversity, should fall before a people roused to a higher life by the newly awakened energy of unanimous trust in divine power.

It may be argued that the people of Canaan were dealt with harshly in being so utterly destroyed and that it shows the utmost cruelty on the part of the Hebrews, but may it not also be regarded a work of mercy for the humanity of the future? Even as it was, the small portion of the Canaanites who were left and the nations around them so tempted the Israelites by their idolatrous practices

that we read continually of all Israel turning away from God's service and adopting the abominable vices that were connected with their forms of worship. The Hebrews would have been overwhelmed by their influence had they been allowed to live side by side with them. The contest was not as to the fate of one of the nations of Palestine but as to the fate of humanity, and there may be some justification for the statement that "the Israelites' sword in its bloodiest executions wrought a work of mercy for all the world."

Again, if the Canaanites had been spared and reduced to slavery, the result, judging from analogy, would have meant the deep corruption of the Hebrews. "With abundance of slave labor, the Jews would not have taken to industry, nor have acquired the virtues which industry alone can produce and guard. Their fate would have been like that of the Turks and other conquering hordes of the East, which, the rush of conquest once over, have sunk into mere slough and sensuality. And from what we know of the immorality of the Canaanites we can understand that the possession of such slaves by the Hebrews would have been depraving in the highest degree. Viewing the Israelites as the consciously commissioned ministers of heaven's vengeance upon an utterly corrupt race, their case is lifted completely out of the common range of warfare and becomes entirely unique, no longer to be judged by ordinary, ethical standards."

Ottley well summarizes the whole situation when he says:

Here is no partiality of a merely national God befriending His worshippers at the expense of others without regard to justice; here rather is a Power making for righteousness and against iniquity; yea, a Power acting with a beneficent regard to the good of humanity, burying a putrifying carcass out of sight lest it should taint the air. After all, the Canaanite nations were put under the ban, not for false belief, but for vile actions—a significant circumstance which plainly implies that in the execution of His righteous purpose, God is guided by one supreme aim, the elevation of human character. If Israel was duly to discharge its mission and to become the vehicle to mankind of a purer religion and loftier morality, it was necessary, humanly speaking, that a signal manifestation should be made at the very outset of its history, of the divine hostility to sin. It is to be observed finally that Israel itself is threatened with a similar judgment in the event of its yielding to the depraved rights or practices of Heathendom. These considerations at least suggest that the idea of individuality is one for which a model basis is required. The interests of morality may well have demanded an inexorably severe treatment of an evil which might have fatally thwarted God's beneficent purpose for mankind at the very outset. It was more important that a people destined to be the missionary of the world should have a just conception of the meaning of divine holiness, than that it should learn the duty of respect for individual rights.

Whilst therefore the traditional Jew of today does not seek to justify these cruelties and cannot and

would not condone such actions which form so unpleasant a feature of the infancy of many ancient peoples (and unfortunately too many modern peoples also), he cannot help feeling that when viewed in the fuller light of history there may have been much greater necessity for some of these stern measures than most of us nowadays seem prepared to admit.

Viewing the history of Israel throughout various periods we can account for the same spirit constantly prevailing. With all their faults Jepthah and Samson were engaged in a cause of the utmost importance to the world, for they preserved unhurt the seed of eternal life and were the ministers of blessing to all other nations, though they themselves failed to enjoy it.

We are prepared to acknowledge that the days of the judges were days of rudeness and barbarity. In fact, the Bible itself declares this, but we have no difficulty in understanding how at times men of the type of Jepthah (whose actions and speech betray the very rudeness of his age) were inspired by the reality of revelation. Deborah was undoubtedly a real prophetess and possessed the qualifications necessary for judging the tribes of Israel, although the language she employs in her song of victory shows that she was in many respects a child of the age.

Any unbiased student of the Bible must admit that no other religion of antiquity inculcated sym-

pathy and mercy and condemned hatred and revengefulness with the same decision and earnestness as the Book of Books. We have already noted how the stranger is to be treated as the home-born. The widow, the fatherless, the homeless, and distressed are all under God's protection, and the Mosaic code is full of provision for them. But where there is enmity to God or to the great causes of humanity, there the attitude of the Bible is one of uncompromising hostility.

In this connection let us think also of the teachings of the great Rabbis who succeeded the biblical era. As we have already noted, Judaism whilst based on the Bible has been one continuous process of development, and its ethics and morality are the fruits of the inspiration of the Rabbis and teachers of the later periods of Jewish life, whose work is to be found in Talmud and Midrash, Halacha and Haggadah. The Rabbis showed the utmost tolerance toward the non-Jew and taught that paradise is no privileged place for the Hebrew, as the pious among the Gentiles will also participate in eternal life. True, the Hebrews permitted the usage of blood-revenge, which was a very rude method of justice in a tribal state of society; but care was taken to make this right ineffective by the law of the Cities of Refuge. Their laws concerning marriage and divorce put restrictions on polygamy and the wanton putting away of a wife. And as we shall see later, after the Exile, particularly,

monogamy seems to have become the prevailing rule.

The character of David, who is represented in the Bible as a deeply religious man in spite of his sin against Uriah, has often caused much difficulty to students, although any true analysis of the details of his life shows his real greatness. His sexual weakness which resulted in sin was certainly the most conspicious defect of his character; to it, as the historian clearly perceived, the greatest sorrows of his life were due. Let us note, however, that such a narrative would have been omitted altogether by any historian who was not in perfect accord with the aims and ideals of the truly moral life. The author of the Book of Chronicles does not repeat the story, feeling perhaps that it would not redound to the credit of one who was in other respects a God-fearing man in the finest sense of the term.

The author of the Book of Kings, however, tells us the whole story as it occurred—the plain, simple, unvarnished truth. He attempts neither malice on the one hand nor extenuating circumstances on the other. The prophet Nathan gained for his people a great moral victory when they knew their monarch whose hands were stained with adultery and murder had humbled himself before God and said, "I have sinned."

Carlyle's eloquent summary of the character of David may here be profitably recalled: "Who is called the man after God's own heart? David, the

Hebrew King, had fallen into sins enough—blackest crimes, there was no want of sin. And therefore unbelievers sneer and ask, 'Is this, your man according to God's own heart?' The sneer, I must say, seems to me but a shallow one. What are faults, what are the outward details of a life, if the inner secret of it, the remorse, temptations, the often-baffled, never-ending struggle of it, be forgotten. . . . David's life and history, as written for us in those psalms of his, I consider to be the truest emblem ever given of a man's moral progress and warfare here below. All earnest souls will ever discover in it the faithful struggle of an earnest human soul toward what is good and best. Struggle often baffled—sore baffled—driven as into entire wreck; yet a struggle never ended, ever with tears, repentance, unconquerable purpose, begun anew." If it is true that the greatest achievement of history is to develop the perfect and arm conscience, then we know more fully as we read such a tale how God effectively makes Himself known.

We now come to the difficulty as to the imprecatory Psalms. The attacks made upon the Bible on account of the revolting language of some of the Psalms are due entirely to misunderstanding. The modern mind finds no difficulty in understanding the words of comparatively modern poets for writing works of a similar nature. Why should an ancient poet be condemned for figurative language of that type? Let us consider the language of Milton,

which is very similar. In one of his poems he writes:

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones," . . .
(*Poem on Late Massacre in Piedmont.*)

Yet no one has condemned Milton for the expression of such sentiments, for it is generally understood that his language is purely poetic and figurative. Do we moderns reproach the laws of any people because like the imprecatory Psalms they so severely condemn and punish the transgressor? Why should we reproach the author of these Psalms for his writings? The psalmist as a deeply religious man expresses the curse of God against wicked men. Surely the tender character of the Hebrews forbids our believing that they should have desired such cruel punishments against any people unless they were criminals of the worst type who had committed the most heinous crimes.

True, the language of these Psalms is revolting to the modern mind, nor is it in accordance with our conceptions of Jewish ethics; but we must also remember that these are figurative poems, written with the bold metaphor and startling hyperbole which is the true characteristic of Oriental style. Max Müller has rightly pointed out that if we persist in understanding the words of Oriental writers

in their outward aspect only and deliberately misinterpret their language, the fault is ours, not theirs. And he rightly continues that half of the difficulties in the history of religious thought owe their origin to the constant misinterpretation of ancient language by modern language, of ancient thought by modern thought.

"Is it not remarkable that the Hebrews with all their moral purity and their high conception of womanhood should have encouraged polygamy?" This and statements of a similar kind have been made time after time. Let us note at once that the Bible condones polygamy but certainly does not encourage it. The patriarchs Abraham and Jacob had more than one wife, but further consideration of the facts shows clearly that their action was contrary to the divine order from the beginning. According to the Oriental mode of expression, to represent the first man as having had one wife only was as much as to say that monogamy was the ideal system. "Therefore, shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh" are the words uttered by the inspired voice from Eden.

In the early period of Israel's history there was a desire to increase the number of the race and the addition of women as wives and concubines served both for reproduction and protection. As the Hebrews conquered their neighbors they intermarried with them in spite of the decrees against

these privileges, and we read often with implied reproach of the many wives which they had during the periods of the Judges and the Kings.

True, it was only comparatively late in history that man decided to establish the institution of monogamous marriage, but in theory it is already there in the Bible. The prophets constantly used the symbol of the abiding union of one man with one woman as a symbol of the union of God with His people, while polygamy and its counterpart, idolatory, are branded in many prophetic pages. Monogamy is always commended as being a life of deepest joy. "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing" (Prov. xviii. 22); "Rejoice with the wife of thy youth" (Prov. v. 18); "A prudent wife is from the Lord" (Prov. xix. 24)—these are but a few of the passages which illustrate this point. In each case one notes that the singular "wife," not the plural, occurs.

If the Hebrew legislators could not abolish polygamy altogether in the earliest periods of their history, they at least modified the existing system so that the handmaid or concubine was treated with very great consideration. She could not be sold into slavery and careful provision was made for the captive women who were concubines. Active measures were taken for the legal regulation of the system, so as to confine the practice within narrower limits. We will consider some of these. The law in Deuteronomy, voicing the sense of the calamities

polgamy brought upon royalty and the nation, forbids kings to multiply wives (Deut. xvii. 17). Again, the law addressed itself with great earnestness to the protection of the interests of the several wives and the amelioration of the condition of the slave-wives. We read in Exodus (xxi. 7) how the Israelitish woman who has been purchased for a slave-wife must be set free if three conjugal rights are withheld from her. Even the foreign slave-wife, captured in war, is to be treated with consideration. She is to be allowed a month of mourning, and her master, after living with her as his wife, is forbidden to sell her (Deut. xxi. 10). If a woman loses her husband's affections, the law insists that her son, if the firstborn, shall receive his due portion (Deut. xxi. 15-18).

We notice that after the account of the first man who only had one wife, when the narrative continues to relate the corruption of a later period, polygamy makes its appearance in the lawless line of the Canaanites (Gen. iv. 23). Noah, the second father of the human race, also represents monogamy (Gen. vii. 7), and there seems to be an apologetic strain for the polygamy of the patriarchs. It is Sarah's desire for children that causes Abraham to take another wife (Gen. xvi. 1), and the polygamy of Jacob seems due to his having been deceived by Laban (Gen. xxix. 23).

A true survey of the history of Israel gives us every justification for regarding many of the leaders

of the Hebrews who had more than one wife as the victims rather than the authors of the public institution of polygamy and serfdom; whilst after the Exile monogamy certainly became the prevailing rule.

We may note here that the Talmudic scheme of married life is based entirely on a monogamous basis and that there is no reference in the Talmud to a man's wives but always to his wife. Dr. Israel Abrahams discusses the question at length in his book *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages,* and the following quotation from this work may not be out of place here: "Monogamy was not the condition and basis of a pure home life; the assertion that it was so transposes cause and effect. Monogamy was the result and not the cause of the idealized conception of the family relations. The hallowing of the home was one of the earliest factors in the development of Judaism after the Babylonian exile and the practice of monogamy grew up then as a flower of the family hearth. The whole of the Talmud is based on monogamous custom. The allusions to women throughout its pages invariably presuppose such a custom, for although the Jewish law permitted polygamy, Jewish practice very early abrogated the license."

Finally we may point out that the oft-repeated statement that monogamy was primarily a Christian institution introduced by the founders of Christianity is entirely incorrect. In the literary remains

of a Jewish sect, published by the late Dr. Schechter, under the title of *Fragments of a Zadokite Work,* polygamy is strictly prohibited, and even marriage with another woman while a man had a divorced wife living was regarded as fornication and was apparently put in the same category with having two wives at the same time. This sect, the date of which may be fixed roughly at about 200 B.C.E., has been shown by Professor Louis Ginzberg to have been a strictly Pharisaic sect. Its principal seat was in the region of Damascus where its adherents formed numerous communities. We thus see how the tendency to legislate against polygamy by at least one Jewish sect antedates the Christian era.

Let us now proceed to consider some of the difficulties which have been agitating the minds of many traditional Jews as to the variances between numerous references to scientific thought in the Bible and those accepted by modern science. Our difficulties in this respect are due merely to our attempts to regard the Bible as a manual of twentieth-century astronomy and geology and to our insistence on treating it as a modern book of science and history instead of regarding it as a book of religion. These difficulties would disappear entirely if we would not attempt to test the ethical value of the Bible or defend or deny its inspiration from the twentieth-century standpoint of history and scientific criticism.

Our fathers, believing that every reference throughout the Bible to the phenomena of nature

must be taken literally, were forced to the position either that any advance to a clearer knowledge of the science of nature must be set aside as fiction, or that the Bible was in many places unscientific and untrue.

In this connection one is reminded of the ridiculous encounters between the Christian theologians and astronomers some four hundred years ago. Theology had agreed with the old astronomy that the earth was flat and square and stationary. The new astronomy declared the earth to be a revolving globe, rushing through the stellar spaces. Theology taught that the universe was a sort of two-story basement building—earth being the parlor floor, heaven the upper floor, and hell the basement. Where was heaven and where was hell if the earth turned up and sped onward? It was regarded as a test case and a fight to the very death, for the Bible was believed to be opposed to this new astronomy. If the new astronomy gained the day, faith was doomed. Luther's arguments were that the Bible is infallible and that it speaks of "the four corners of the earth," but a sphere has no corners, and if the Bible is mistaken then all faith in God must disappear. The new astronomy won the day, but religion in its various forms has still remained.

We feel that all these difficulties will disappear if we bear in mind that the views of the origin and laws of the physical universe which are found in the Bible are views which were current at the time those

writings were composed, and it is not surprising therefore that these views do not correspond with present-day astronomy or biology. The Bible was written in the Orient in the first instance for Orientals of the time, and we cannot therefore expect to find it a manual of present-day views of physics and chemistry. Bible statements concerning topics within the realm of science must be considered as giving the views of their times and as containing just such truth as had been reached by the processes of thought and observation which had been developed up to that time. An explanation in the Book of Genesis of the processes of the development of order, beauty, and life such as scientists give today would have created in those days false impressions instead of true ones. These writings were composed first of all for the people of the time in which they were read, written in the language and reflecting the highest ideas of the time.

Every book must be judged in the light of its purpose. A book dealing with physics or chemistry must be held responsible for those subjects and nothing else. If it contains references to history or philosophy which are not exactly in accordance with present-day accepted views, that would not modify our opinions of its scientific value. So the Bible must be judged in the light of its purpose, which is to bring God and men into such satisfying relations with each other that they will work together for the creation of a new social order char-

acterized by holy living and righteousness. The infallibility of the Bible does not depend upon our acceptance of its references to science or astronomy, but upon its effective achieving of the end it sought and still seeks. And we maintain that it has always accomplished and still succeeds in accomplishing this purpose.

We must bear in mind that the references in the Bible to geography, astronomy, and other branches of science occur not in a treatise on geography or astronomy but in a treatise on religion. And when terms had to be used to describe natural phenomena, those in popular use had to be employed. There were no others known. Even if modern terms had been known and used by a selected few, they would have been misunderstood. The references to current, scientific conceptions do not detract one jot from the value of a book the object of which was to teach religious truth.

Let us remember that in every respect excepting their remarkable knowledge of divine truths the authors of the various books of the Bible were like their neighbors. They had no special knowledge above their fellows as to general science and history and did not pronounce their revelations in a scientific form. If this had not been the case, how utterly unintelligible would their words have been to their fellow men! Conceive of a prophet or psalmist, endowed with prophetic knowledge, and talking of the various geological periods in the history of the

earth or of the planetary system according to the Newtonian laws, instead of simply declaring "In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth," and speaking of "the Sun going forth as a bridegroom to run his course."

The authors of the Bible disclosed the mighty truths of God in the common and ordinarily picturesque and poetic language of the days in which they lived. This form, now requiring study and reflection to apprehend its meaning, was inseparable from their daily life and the only common medium for the conveyance of revelation to all ages. In no other form, humanly speaking, would they have struck so deeply into the mind and heart of men or clung to them with such unseverable tenacity. We regard these books as the oracles of God in their divine instructions, while the language in which they were spoken was human and uttered in a style to be understood by men of all ages.

The Bible is literature—religious literature. Its entire purpose is to portray, illustrate, exhort, and beget the life of reverence and prayer and hope and fraternity and purity and sympathy. It makes use of all outward things merely to unfold and inspire the life of righteousness and worship. Its writers accepted the common ideas and beliefs of their time and used whatever came to hand for the illustration of model and spiritual truths. Again, in attempting to understand the Bible, as well as other Oriental literatures, our difficulties are caused by the fact that

we are such literalists in this Western and scientific world. We find it so difficult to break away from things physical, and in our devotion to material facts we take some of the beautiful visions and sublime rhetoric of biblical literature and degrade it into cast-iron contradictions of science. We can only overcome these difficulties by realizing the poetic spirit of the people who wrote the Bible and of the language in which it is written.

Every general truth expressed by the Hebrews is rendered with the utmost directness, and in phraseology as pictorial, as elemental, as stimulating to imagination and feeling as possibly could be. Such a language is the very language of poetry. The medium through which poetry works is the world of sensible objects—wine and oil, the cedar of Lebanon, the moon, the cloud, the smoking hills. In order to make poetry out of materials one requires intensity of feeling, elevation and coherence of thought, and these were the very endowments of the Hebrews. On the one hand they were close to nature; they had not parceled out their human constitution into separate and independent faculties, nor had they interposed a hubbub of words between themselves and things. They were still capable of naïve views, powerful sensations, and vigorous convictions; on the other hand, they had, as tending to coherence and elevation of thought, what to them was a sufficient explanation of all the wonders of the universe and a sufficient impulse to lift up their hearts

—an overmastering belief in God, the Creator, God the Maintainer, and for those who trust and love Him, God the Deliverer.

Many Jews find difficulty in understanding the Mosaic narrative of creation in view of the teachings of twentieth-century science. There is certainly no portion of the Bible which has caused greater difficulty in this respect than the first chapter of Genesis. Commentators and teachers have expended more time in attempting to reconcile certain of its declarations with the known or supposed teachings of science than on any other aspect of biblical literature.

It used to be taken for granted by scientists and theologians in their controversies that we have here a literal account of the making of the universe in six days of twenty-four hours each and that we must accept the various stages of creation in the order given, and the slightest proved inaccuracy will totally invalidate the trustworthiness of the whole. Again, all kinds of interpretations have been given to the Hebrew terms used in Genesis in order to make them more reconcilable with the teachings of modern scientific thought. For example, we are told by some scholars that the word "days" is not to be taken in a literal but in a figurative sense. It means not the ordinary day but the work of creation which was unfolded in time by a series of progressive transformations. For a similar reason, the words "evening" and "morning" are interpreted metaphorically

as meaning not dusk and dawn but the beginning and end of the divine works.

To the modern Jew all these controversies are of purely academic interest, for success in either one direction or another cannot modify our attitude toward the Book of Books. Whether the first chapter of Genesis is science to the scientist or history to the historian does not affect our attitude to Judaism and the Bible one iota. For to us it is primarily a hymn of creation which takes this form so as to impress upon man throughout all ages that it was God, the great creative spirit, who brought everything into existence. To quote the words of Elmslie, "The idea of the arrangement followed is on the face of it (not chronological) but literary and logical. It is chosen for its comprehensiveness, its all-inclusive completeness. To declare of every part and atom of nature that it is the making of God, the author passes in procession the great elements or spheres which the human mind everywhere conceives as making up the world, and pronounces them, one by one, God's creation. Then he makes an inventory of their entire furniture and content, and asserts that all these are likewise the work of God. For his purpose—which is to declare the universal creatorship of God and the uniform creature-hood of nature —the order is unsurpassed and unsurpassable. With a masterly survey which marks everything and omits nothing, he sweeps the whole category of creative existence, collects the scattered leaves into

six congruous groups, encloses each in a compact and uniform binding, and then, on the back of the numbered and uniformed and ordered volumes, stamps the great title and declaration that they are one and all, every jot, tittle, shred, and fragment, the works of their Almighty author, and of none beside."

To us the purport of the Mosaic account of the Creation is not to teach geology, physics, zoölogy, or astronomy, but to affirm in the most simple and direct manner the creative act of God and His sovereignty over all creatures. Its object is not to anticipate any of the truths of science or philosophy but to guard the Hebrews against the pernicious errors and idolatrous practices which were then everywhere prevalent.

Let us note, further, in considering the first chapter of Genesis that the cosmogony of Moses is the only one which antiquity has left us that can claim our assent or challenge the investigation of science. There may be passages in it which do not at present admit of a satisfactory explanation, but there is nothing involving contradiction, and still less is there anything that can be crowned with absurdity. It is absolutely peerless compared with the other cosmogonies of the ancient world and it is as far above them as history is above fiction, as truth above falsehood. One has only to place the Mosaic account of creation side by side with the cosmogonies of other nations of antiquity who, in many respects,

were far above the Hebrews in civilization and culture to realize the greatness of the Bible. The spade of the excavator has been revealing to us within recent years the wonderful creations in science and art of some of the Oriental nations who were neighbors of the Hebrews, and yet how different is their conception of the creation of the universe from that of the Hebrews!

With a few bold strokes we are given the picture of the history of creation telling us how in the beginning God created heaven and earth. There is no ambiguity, vacillation or obscurity in the words of the Hebrew writer, who in a single sentence condemns the dualism of the Eastern sage and the doctrine of the eternity of matter of the Greek Sophist.

Great floods have flown
From simple sources, and great seas have dried
When miracles have by the greatest been denied.

SHAKESPEARE: *All's Well That Ends Well,*
Act II, Scene I.

The progress of our knowledge will not eliminate the miraculous but will enlarge our perception of it. It will transfer our interest from the infrequent disclosure of God in the marvelous and the dramatic to the constant disclosure of God in the ordinary course of daily life . . . indeed, it is in the miracle of the commonplace, not in the miracle of the crisis, that God is most evidently manifested. This is his accustomed disclosure. The undivineness of the natural and the unnaturalness of the divine has well been called the great heresy of popular thought respecting religion.

HODGES: *Every Man's Religion.*

CHAPTER IV

JUDAISM AND MIRACLES

"It takes a miracle to prove a miracle"—Recent developments in science would have been regarded as miraculous a few years ago—Various definitions of miracle—Natural law—We may argue that miracles *do* not happen, but we have no right to say that miracles *cannot* happen—The Rabbis pointed out that the true greatness of a prophet is not to be measured by the miracles he performs, but by the content of his message—"The Jews ask for signs as the Greeks seek for wisdom"—The symbolism of language—Joshua's command to the sun—The Book of Jonah—Suggestion and auto-suggestion—The beliefs of all ancient races in miracles are the means of strengthening our faith in God—Danger of eliminating the miraculous entirely from Jewish history—Whether the modern Jew accepts certain literal accounts of miraculous events or not, he must admit that God *did* lead his people "with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with signs and wonders."

We will now proceed to consider the problem of the miracles in the Bible, a subject which has been causing considerable difficulty to many modern Jews. In fact, some of the Bible miracles, such as the "standing still of the sun at Joshua's behest," the story of Balaam's ass, and the account of Jonah and the whale, to mention but a few instances, are often the causes of considerable amusement to the modern mind.

Again, we are told that the effect of the universal recognition of the exclusion of the miracle from our view of history as a principle of criticism must result in eliminating the miraculous from Jewish history. Let us therefore proceed to consider this problem in detail.

In the first place, we must realize that if we are to prove that an event is miraculous in the same sense in which it was looked upon by our fathers, we should have to prove that in addition to our present impossibility to assign it its place in any observed sequence, we shall never be able to do so in the future, and this is obviously impossible. It is therefore perhaps correct to argue that it takes a miracle to prove a miracle.

Again, our modern critical scholars, starting out with the axiom that miracles are impossible, are often tempted to regard the text of the Bible containing such narratives as later embellishments of the original occurrence. In fact, the impossibility of miracles is no longer regarded by many as an hypothesis, but as an established truth. As Jews, however, we cannot help noting that many of those scholars who regard the Old Testament miracles as beyond the bounds of possibility never question the actual occurrence of the Gospel miracles, and even regard them as overwhelming proofs of the Christian revelation.

We are prepared to agree that, if the narrative of a miraculous occurrence can be shown upon sound

historical evidence to be spurious, then the critics have a right to exclude it from the original text. But we certainly have no justification for ridiculing the miracles of the Bible, or omitting them from the text, merely because we cannot understand them. Do we understand how the grass grows at our feet, how the egg becomes a bird, or how the butterfly can be the same creature which only a few months previously was a crawling caterpillar? Is not the new life which springs forth daily from life preceding a miracle in itself? Is not the very law of gravitation by which the stone cast into the air is compelled to move downward a miracle? The very life of man, the combination of matter and spirit, the interdependence of mind and body are miracles in themselves. Surely, the more we think of the miracles of the present, the easier it is for us to understand the miracles of the past. In the words of one philosopher, "The fact that one meets the miraculous in his own experience makes it entirely unnecessary to stumble at the miracles which others have experienced."

To the Jew who implicitly believes in the miracles of the Bible, in the popularly accepted sense of the term "miracle," and regards them as forms of the arbitrary suspension of cosmic law by divine fiat, there are no difficulties in this connection. But how is the matter to be explained to other Jews who from the dawn of their intellectual maturity have stumbled at the miracles of the Bible, and have

thereby been led to breathe the arid air of unfaith? To many of these Jews all the Bible narratives about the superphysical are fairy tales, human dreams. They insist that in this age of science we cannot speculate about airy phantoms of our own, but must stand upon the firm rock of reality. The natural sciences have taught us how to weigh matter and analyze its component parts. How, therefore, can we be expected to believe in miracles? They tell us that it is not *rational* to believe in miracles, and that the modern mind cannot accept the miraculous because it is contrary to all scientific facts. They start out with the presupposition that miracles are incredible and are the expression of a supernaturalism which is to them unacceptable (though there is a considerable difference of opinion amongst them as to what this supernaturalism actually is), and they emphasize that "nothing can press on the soul of man with the leaden weight of inscrutable authority."

Let us consider whether it is really fair to argue that the belief in the miraculous is contrary to scientific facts. In the first place, it is interesting to note that the scientific attitude to miracles is much less hostile nowadays than it was a century ago, and the new vistas open to science have made a spiritual interpretation of the universe more possible. In fact, we note with pleasure that the attitude of men of science toward manifestations of things of which they had previously not even dreamed is no longer

the arrogant scepticism of former days, which often deliberately refused to enlarge its bounds to admit the new fact. In fact, there is more justification for our saying that in the realm of physical science the border-line between knowledge and what our predecessors would assuredly have called the "unknowable" has become vague, nay, has practically disappeared. Fortunately, we are now beginning to realize how absurd such an attitude is, for we see daily before our eyes developments in science which would have been regarded as "miraculous" beyond the bounds of possibility only a few years ago. We seem to see daily how science itself is putting an end to the dogma of the impossibility of miracles.

Have we not been witnessing miracles in our own day? Has not nature entrusted us with some of her secrets by means of which we have been enabled to revolutionize the universe—our perfection of the steamer and the aeroplane; and the recent eclipsing of the telephone and the telegraph by our ability to write and speak on the waves of the air. Man is thus compelled to feel that if he who had no hand in the creation or arrangement of these forces can gain some mastery over them, surely the intelligent power who planned and executed them to his will can direct and control these forces according to his desire.

If we had been informed about half a century ago that certain rays of light, invisible themselves to our eyes, could penetrate various substances and make

the very skeleton of the human frame visible, should we not have regarded it as miraculous? Would not our ancestors have regarded a piece of radium, no larger than the head of a pin and yet possessed of such an enormous and inexhaustive abundance of heat and light, as a miracle in itself? Dr. Harker, F.R.S., a distinguished English scientist, in a paper on "Science and the Unknown," writes: "As an illustration of what might be called a genuine scientific miracle, insomuch as it has appeared to be inconsistent with accepted fundamental principles, let us take the discovery of X-rays, which, as all the world knows, was made by Röntgen in 1895. I well remember the sensation aroused in Manchester when some of the first photographs of his results were sent by Röntgen to Professor Schuster. The interest they excited was profoundly greater than that of an ordinary nine-days' wonder. One photograph was that of the bones of the hand, hazy and ghostlike, and many who saw it were utterly sceptical as to its genuineness; others scoffed."

Surely, we who are constantly witnessing the miraculous ought to be the last people to doubt its possibility. To argue that science has declared miracles impossible and that their impossibility can be scientifically demonstrated is absolutely erroneous and untrue. Many of us actually feel a difficulty in the use of the terms "natural" and "supernatural," seeing that no definite line of demarcation can be drawn between them. All that we can say

is that we need the term "nature" to express the visible world with its law and order, and the term "supernatural" to express that which lies in the unknown beyond. In fact, it is often the perfectly smooth and uniform which is the most difficult to perceive. Sir Oliver Lodge aptly illustrates this: "Those fish, for instance, which are submerged in ocean depths, beyond the reach of waves and tides, are probably utterly unconscious of the existence of water; and, however intelligent, they can have little reason to believe in that medium—notwithstanding that their whole being, life and motion are dependent upon it from instant to instant. The motion of the earth, again, furious rush though it is—fifty times faster than a cannon ball—is quite inappreciable to our senses; it has to be inferred from celestial observations and it was strenuously disbelieved by the agnostics of an earlier day."

But before we proceed to a fuller discussion of the subject, let us try to understand what exactly is meant by the term "miracle." Various definitions have been given. It has been defined by some as "an occasional evidence of direct divine power in an action striking and unusual." Others again regard it as "that which violates the principles of the order to which it belongs." Locke defined the miracle as "a sensible operation, which being above the comprehension of the spectator, and in his opinion contrary to the established course of nature, is taken by him to be divine." Some philosophers like

Spinoza have argued that "miracle is only an expression of our ignorance." The simplest definition seems to be that "when God does anything against that order of nature which we know and are accustomed to observe, we call it a miracle." A miracle is thus a transaction which apparently does not conform in all respects with what we regard as natural law. We must realize that nowadays different people use the term with entirely different meanings. One person may mean by the term "miracle" a direct interposition of the deity, whilst another will understand thereby "an act due to unknown intelligent and living agencies operating in a self-willed and unpredictable manner; thus effecting changes that would not otherwise have occurred, and that are not in the regular course of nature." One scientist has well illustrated this by considering the case of the "community of an ant-hill, on a lonely, uninhabited island, undisturbed for centuries, whose dwelling is kicked over one day by a shipwrecked sailor. The ants had reason to suppose that events were uniform and all their difficulties ancestrally known, it must seem to them an unintelligible miracle."

We often use the term "miracle" without being aware of its significance. For example, we refer to a great work of art as a miracle, meaning thereby that it is a wonder. Now wonderfulness is really a relative term, for there are mainly two kinds of ideas that would be connected with it. It may

suggest impressiveness on account of its novelty or variety. This then would refer to the impression produced by a scene or object upon the person who witnesses it. For example, when the Bible refers to the "wonders He hath done," there seems no hint or reference to any disturbance in the natural laws of the universe or to any special unprecedented event, but merely to the impressive acts of God. It is the novelty and unprecedentedness which has caused this wonder in Israel. In fact, some philosophers would argue that the miracle, in the stringent sense that is required for such evidential functioning, is something which cannot with certainty be identified as such. For even if we can definitely prove that certain phenomena which have been described as miracles actually occurred, this would by no means prove that they were "miracles." These marvelous phenomena may cause faith, but they are no proof that any direct divine activity was concerned in their production.

When, therefore, we refer to the wonderfulness of a miracle, the most that we can claim for it is that it is an event which *suggests* divine activity, just as the success of science *suggests* that the postulates underlying induction are true.

It has been argued that miracles are impossible because they are infringments or interruptions of natural law, and as every natural law is unalterably fixed and cannot cease to act for one moment, the occurrence of the Bible miracles would be contrary

to the supposed inviolability of natural law. Now, in the first place, we are not at all clear as to what is meant by "natural law." What are natural laws if not simply descriptions of our scientific experience what Darwin called "the grinding of laws out of general instances"? Has not our knowledge of the subject of natural law been obtained by contact with nature and observation of her secrets? Was it not the very natural thing of the falling of an apple which led Newton to the discovery of the law of gravitation? Our knowledge of natural law is by no means fixed and determined, but is subject to revision and improvement and must obviously become more exact as our knowledge of nature's methods become clearer. It is not so very long ago since it was considered natural law for the sun to revolve round the earth. No law of nature asserts categorically that anything must happen, only that it will happen if certain conditions continue; and that these conditions will continue is in the last resort a matter of mere expectation. Common sense is apt to confine its practical and psychological certitude as to the sun's rising tomorrow with logical certainty or necessary truth; but logically there is no connection. The true scientist confesses that he knows nothing of laws that shall never be broken. All that he can argue is that, within certain tracts of the universe and for a certain time-interval, laws and regularity have been actually found to obtain. But when science speaks of laws that shall even per-

sist until tomorrow, it can only refer to them with sanguine expectation. We may argue that miracles *do not* happen, but we certainly have no right to say that miracles *cannot* happen. To argue that miracles are impossible because they violate law suggests that our knowledge of the universe is much vaster than it really is. John Stuart Mill was certainly correct when he said that the question concerning miracles is not a philosophical but a purely historical one, and so long as we have no exhaustive knowledge of the constitution of nature, the modern mind must admit that it cannot assert that a certain marvel is beyond the unaided powers of nature.

We are all agreed that there is no definiteness in a law of nature, for it is merely an account of some part of nature's behavior up to date, and is thus capable of being revised or superseded. Do we not know of events which were incomprehensible in one generation being reduced to law in another? One of the most recent advances of science—the theory of relativity—has made us realize more clearly that at best our theories of the universe are only relative, according to the truth obtainable by us with our limited vision; and apparent discrepancies between conclusions in one department of experience and another must be considered with the utmost toleration. Science thus leaves theology free to assert the possibility of miracles.

But we are told that an "order" is both necessary and fatal to miracles, and there are many Jews who,

whilst believing in a God, are unwilling to accept the miraculous elements of the Bible, often basing their arguments on divine immanence, on the restriction of God's activity to the fixed order of nature. They tell us that God's immanence is not a matter of volition but of necessity. God acts through the laws of the universe and we have no evidence that He has ever acted in any other way, no right to think that He can act in any other way. Many non-Jewish theologians have argued in the same way, and we are told that "the laws of nature represent the modes of action of God Himself, who is the only true cause and the only true power, and as He is infinite, unchangeably perfect, and perfectly unchangeable, His mode of action is therefore constant and universal, so that there can be no such thing as a violation of God's constant mode of action." Surely, this form of argument makes the world God's eternal prison rather than His eternal dwelling place. Professor Mozley was right when, in referring to the uniformity of nature, he said:[1] "The dogma that natural laws tells us what always has been, will be and must be is not a demonstrable truth, though it may be an irresistible belief for many modern minds. This belief to many is the outcome of a kind of instinctive expectation, but in order to know it as a rational principle, we should have to be possessed of a full knowledge of the ultimate structure of the world—something which science and the modern

[1] Bampton Lectures.

mind cannot claim for the present. Similarly, Sir William Crookes has pointed out "if a new fact seems to oppose what is called a law of nature, it does not prove the asserted fact to be false, but only that we have not yet ascertained all the laws of nature, or not yet learned them correctly."

We are prepared to admit that the question of Bible miracles is bound to cause the modern Jew some difficulty, but this is not due to the fact that the miracles of the Bible exceed the power of God, but rather because they seem to us to be out of harmony with the ascertained *method* of divine action. Let us now proceed to consider the question of the miracles of the Bible from a specifically Jewish standpoint. In the first place we must emphasize that to the ancient Hebrews a miracle meant something entirely different from what it means to us. "The Hebrew mind with its vivid consciousness of God's immediate action in nature did not regard a miracle as an unnatural or supernatural event, but rather as a striking proof of God's power and freedom. To the ancient Hebrews, therefore, a miracle does not stand as an irregular individual occurrence in contrast with a differently ordered whole, but rather as a specially striking individual occurrence in contrast with other single events, which, being less striking owing to their frequency, are less calculated to produce the impression of God's almighty power in executing His purpose." We can thus understand, for example, that phenomena coinci-

dental with a crisis in the nation's history should have been regarded as direct providential interpositions, especially if prayer for deliverance had preceded them. Many Rabbis have pointed out that the true greatness of a prophet is not to be measured by the miracles he performs but by the content of his message. Mendelsohn was certainly arguing in accordance with the true spirit of Jewish thought when he stated that miracles may be appealed to in support of every religion and therefore cannot serve as proof of any. In fact, the Rabbis argued that whilst the Bible miracles appeared to man as something new, in reality they were foreordained by the creative wisdom. They cannot therefore be regarded as interruptions of natural law. For example, we read in Aboth (v. 8) of ten miraculous objects which were created "between the suns." The idea is that these ten things were created at the time of transition from "the six days of creation to the Sabbath." The Rabbis could not define the relation of these miracles to the course of nature to which they wished to assign them, and therefore argued that they must have been preordained. Again, we are told that when God created the world He made an agreement that the sea would divide, the fire not hurt, the lions not harm, the fish not swallow persons singled out by God, and thus the whole order of things changes whenever He finds it necessary.

The attitude of the Talmudic Rabbis toward

miracles has been often misunderstood, particularly by non-Jewish writers, perhaps partly on account of the statement in the New Testament (Cor. i. 22): "The Jews ask for signs as the Greeks seek for wisdom." The writer feels, however, that, in this connection, he cannot do better than quote the words of Dr. Schechter, one of the greatest Talmudic authorities of the last generation:

> In the whole of Rabbinic literature there is not one single instance on record that a Rabbi was ever asked by his colleagues to demonstate the soundness of his doctrine, or the truth of a disputed halachic case, by performing a miracle. Only once do we hear of a Rabbi who had recourse to miracles for the purpose of showing that his conception of a certain Halachah was a right one. And in this solitary instance the majority declined to accept the miraculous intervention as a demonstration of truth and decided against the Rabbi who appealed to it. Nor, indeed, were such supernatural gifts claimed for *all* Rabbis. Whilst many learned Rabbis are said to have "been accustomed to wonders," not a single miracle is reported for instance of the great Hillel, or his colleague, Shammai, both of whom exercised such an important influence on Rabbinic Judaism. On the other hand, we find that such men as, for instance, Choni Hammaagel, whose prayers were much sought after in time of drought, or R. Chanina b. Dosa, whose prayers were often

> solicited in cases of illness, left almost no mark on Jewish thought, the former being known only by the wondrous legends circulating about him, the latter being represented in the whole Talmud only by one or two moral sayings. "Signs" must have been as little required from the Jewish Rabbi as from the Greek sophist.[2]

In fact, the Rabbis seemed to find no difficulty in rationalizing some of the miraculous narratives of the Bible. For example, the account in I Kings xvii. 3-6 as to Elijah's having been fed by ravens was interpreted in a rationalistic manner and the Hebrew word *Orebim* (ravens) was explained as referring to the inhabitants of a town Oreb (Gen. R. xxxv. 5; Hul. 5 a). It is of interest to note that St. Jerome mentions this as a *Jewish* interpretation of the passage, which suggests that it was common in his time amongst the people and was not regarded as merely the interpretation of certain individual Jewish teachers.

There is another aspect of the problem of miracles which cannot be treated fully in the course of these pages, but must be taken note of—the symbolism of all languages and especially of the Semitic languages. We must remember that a careful consideration of most languages shows that they have preserved traces of numerous expressions which represent the free development of the imagination, the

[2] *Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, pp. 6-7.

original significance of which has disappeared. And so we still refer to the treacherous sea, the mad wind, the rising sun, etc. It has been pointed out that all language is poetry. It may not be poetry *in esse* but it is always potential verse, for there is undoubtedly a rhythm in language to which the mind and feelings immediately respond, just as there is a natural rhythm in the beating of the heart, the drawing of the breath, and in many movements of the body. Language has therefore been described as a "fossil poetry." In other words, we are not to look for the poetry which a people may possess only in its poems or its poetical customs, traditions, and beliefs. Many a single word also is itself a concentrated poem, having stores of poetical thought and imagery laid upon it. If we bear this in mind, and remember also that scholars are generally agreed that the key to a profound understanding and faithful explanation of the ancient Oriental world is hidden in a mysterious system of symbolism which is still exceedingly difficult to interpret, we will realize how unnecessary it is for us to regard as prose and literally many miraculous narratives of the Bible which were probably never intended to represent anything but poetical and symbolical accounts of certain events.

In this connection, we may point out that many scholars now agree that quite a number of the symbolical actions of the prophets, particularly those which appear to be miraculous, were not actually

performed in their literal sense, but were conceived as symbolic visions.[3] For example, in the fourth chapter of Ezekiel we are told that the prophet lay upon his side for three hundred and ninety days. How can this be taken literally? In the same chapter we are also told of other extraordinary actions of his. Surely it cannot reasonably be suggested that the prophet would have inconvenienced himself by going to such extremes, merely in order to bring home to the people some divine message which he could very well have preached in a much more suitable manner? For these and many other reasons the symbolisms of the Book of Ezekiel which are not definitely stated to have been performed are regarded as merely a kind of *meshalim,* or parables centering round the prophet as the representative of Israel.

There are two instances, particularly, where hyperbolical or poetical language of the Bible seems to have been hardened into concrete fact, namely, the narrative which describes the standing still of the sun at Joshua's behest and the whole account contained in the Book of Jonah. Let us proceed to consider these in detail.

In the account of the conquest of Western Palestine there is a poetical passage addressed by Joshua to the sun and moon (Josh. x. 12, 13). The people of Gibeon were besieged by Amorites and they sent to Joshua for help. Joshua came up by night and took the Amorites by surprise, chased them over the

[3] Farbridge, *Studies in Biblical Symbolism,* p. 12

central range to its western slopes. Then spake Joshua to JHVH and in the face of Israel said:

> O Sun, on Gibeon be thou still,
> And Moon, on the vale of Ayyalon.
> The Sun is still, and the Moon hath stood,
> Till the folk be avenged on their foes.

Both these couplets are given in the Bible as "written in the Book of Yashar." The second passage from this couplet has been the subject of much difficulty seeing that it has been usually translated in the past tense, "and the Sun *was* still and the Moon *did* stand." Such a translation causes much difficulty and the miracle has been the subject of considerable discussion. The rendering as given above by a distinguished Hebrew scholar is perhaps the most plausible. "It is part of the poem, but in Joshua's mouth at the very moment he has uttered the prayer; its verbs must be understood not in the past but in the present, as is rendered above. The fragment, then, is a prayer, and the confident expression of its fulfillment—a prayer for the day to last long enough for the full rout of Israel's foes." [4]

As an instance of one of the biblical books the miraculous elements of which have caused considerable difficulty to many Jews, but which can easily be understood by a symbolical interpretation, we

[4] G. A. Smith, *The Early Poetry of Israel,* Schweich Lectures, pp. 79f. This is, of course, but one of a number of explanations which seem plausible.

might consider the Book of Jonah. We find so many wonders accumulated in the compass of this narrative and the supernatural element enters into the contents of this book in so unusual a degree, that the story has caused much difficulty to many readers; but though the book has been the cause of much jest to the mocker and considerable bewilderment to the literalist, to the Jew who reads his Bible carefully and attempts to understand its inner spirit it is the cause of considerable pleasure.

The reader who treats the story literally as a record of actual happenings feels it is all passing strange. He is in wonderland and is confronted with difficulties at every step. We are told that a true prophet should disobey a direct divine command and that the Almighty should cause many innocent persons to suffer by sending a storm in order to pursue a single person, and above all that Jonah should have remained in the fish for three days and three nights, exceeds human credibility. But once we place the story into the category to which it probably belongs, and regard it not as the record of actual historical events but as a symbolic narrative, we can enjoy its beauty and submit to its teaching of a truth which is as vital and as necessary today as it was when first told.

The author of the book had a great lesson to teach, a universal truth which he wished to emphasize to the nations as well as to Israel. The great prophets of Israel had been teaching that as JHVH is the only

God that exists, He is the God of all the nations of the world as well as of Israel, and that His love goes out to them all as well as to Israel. Whilst He punishes sin wherever He finds it, He does not desire the death of a sinner, but rather that he repent and live. If mankind continues to take no heed of God inevitable punishment will befall it, and therefore all nations are called upon to return to God and be saved. It was certainly a fine prophetic conception and a glorious doctrine. But the Jews had been cruelly treated by the great world powers and as a result had become narrow and embittered. Various questions perplexed them. Why does JHVH, the God of righteousness, delay His punishment against the heathen? Why does He not interfere on their behalf and vindicate Himself? This was the cry of the Jewish people as the passion in their hearts grew stronger and their hatred of the heathen grew fiercer.

Nevertheless, there were still living in a Hebrew soul the profoundly religious instincts of some of the great prophets of Israel, with their idea of JHVH as the one God of the whole world and their hope that Israel would be the great missionary of mankind by bringing its knowledge of the true God to all the nations of the earth. This great teacher, particularly, felt himself inspired to emphasize this doctrine. But how could he summon Israel to her great cause? He felt that his words would be more effective if he used the symbolical method as a mode

of argument. Taking Jonah as his hero, for the name (Dove) had become a symbolic name for Israel, the prophet is described as hastening to the port of Joppa. He had been told to preach the doctrine of repentance to the gentile world, but his unloving exclusiveness and narrow-mindedness causes him to relinquish his office in the service of God rather than be an instrument of blessing to a heathen nation.

As he gets on board a vessel after his journey he sinks into the wearied sleep of the traveler. The storm rises; the Tyrian sailors are all astir with terror and activity. The stranger unknown to them is attacked with numerous questions. Why hath this happened? What doest thou? Whence are thou? What is thy country? Of what people art thou? Higher and higher the sea seems to surge till at last the victim is thrown in and its rage ceases. He is swallowed by one of the huge monsters of the sea and vanishes from view for three long days and nights. Then comes his hymn of thanksgiving.

A new scene now presents itself. Nineveh, the great city of Assyria, rises before us. Within its vast circumference are included royal palaces and crowded marts and gardens and vineyards. The Hebrew stranger enters its precincts, crying, "Yet forty days and then Nineveh shall be overthrown." Suddenly the scene changes again and Nineveh becomes one vast temple of penitence and prayer. Business and pleasure cease and lamentation and

mourning is heard throughout the land. Even the animals are included in this universal humiliation. Everyone in Nineveh has repented of his evil ways. Their prayers have been heard, and instead of the cloud which hung threateningly over the city there shines forth again upon it the sun of prosperity. "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil ways, and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them and He did it not."

But this prophet, who had desired to see more "than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left" destroyed because of his preconceived notions of the necessities of a logical theory, is greatly displeased at the clemency of God toward Nineveh, and he confesses that it was the expectation that that clemency would be exercised which rendered him unwilling to undertake the divine mission at first. And now another scene appears before our eyes. Jonah is enjoying shelter from the burning rays of the sun by a wide-spreading plant which covers his booth with its refreshing shade. But suddenly the plant is attacked by insects. Its protecting leaves are destroyed and the rays of the sun pour down on his defenseless head. The prophet therefore again complains. And God now replies, saying, "Thou hadst pity on a short-lived plant which cost thee naught and thou art angry even unto death for its loss. Shall not I, the Lord of mankind, have mercy

upon a city including six score thousand innocent children who are incapable of moral discrimination?"

We now appreciate the great religious doctrine taught by the book. "It is the rare protest of theology against the excess of theology. It is the faithful delineation, through all its various states of the dark, sinister, selfish side of even great religious teachers. It is the grand biblical appeal to the common instincts of humanity and to the universal love of God against the narrow dogmatism of sectarian polemics." We thus understand why the book is read on the most sacred day of the Jewish calendar. It is not to encourage credulity or belief in the miraculous but to emphasize to us on the great Day of Atonement that man is not a curse-laden creature, groaning under the yoke of original sin. But all of us—Jew and Gentile alike—are bidden to examine our conduct and confess our failings and we shall find that within us alone lies the source of our misery, and true repentance is the only means by which reconciliation can be brought between the sin-laden mortal and his Maker.

Some of us feel that we can even see in this story of a storm-tossed prophet, amid the threatening crew, a symbolic representation of Israel the wanderer. Having left his homeland, embarking upon the treacherous tide and committing himself into the hands of strangers who make him responsible for their misfortunes, he is cast to the mercy of

the pitiless waves. The questions hurled at the prophet, "What is thine occupation and whence comest thou?" "What is thy country and of what people art thou?" are the questions which have been hurled at us by all peoples in all lands, and our one reply has been, "I am a Hebrew."

When anti-Semitic scholars refer to the intolerance of the God of Israel, let us remind them that the great doctrine of the boundless power of human repentance, which is the basis of true religion today, received its first illustration from the Bible—from the repentance of the people of Nineveh at the preaching of Jonah.

Finally, in the discussion of the possible interpretations of the miracles of the Bible, we ought to refer to the advance in medical science which causes us to interpret differently some of the healing narratives of the Bible. Whilst it is not our intention to attempt to prove in the course of this work that any given cases of healing in the Bible have their parallel in recent developments in medical science, there seems little doubt that some of the Elijah and Elisha stories, for example, suggest the employment of these methods.

The great advance in the science of psychoanalysis, for which we are primarily indebted to Professor Freud of Vienna, has revolutionized our modern theory of neuroses. And the last war, which stimulated the practice of psychotherapy and brought to our hospitals a considerable number of

patients suffering from shell-shock and various war-neuroses, increased very considerably our knowledge of the methods of this form of treatment. Without, however, entering into a discussion of the conflicting views of psychoanalysts, one can safely say that, although few medical men would probably profess themselves to be whole-hearted followers of Freud, there are few that would not admit that they owe much to his teachings. Another science worthy of mention in this connection is autosuggestion, and we may note further that, apart from specific examples, even the little knowledge that we have of the powers of suggestion would lead us to believe that many skin diseases can be at least mitigated by this agency. We know that suggestion is capable of influencing the blood supply and also of abolishing pain; whilst Professor Baudouin, in his work *Suggestion and Autosuggestion,* writes: "We have to note that there is no radical difference between the action of suggestion when its results are purely functional and its action when its results are organic. If we admit that suggestion can act in the former cases (and this has long been admitted) there need be no difficulty about acknowledging the reality of its action in the latter case."

As to the possibilities of the treatment of disease by means of hypnotic suggestion, we might quote the words of a distinguished authority on the subject: "When we know more about hypnotic suggestion, and have attained a greater skill in inducing it in a larger proportion of patients, we may be able

to affect for good any organic inflammatory condition, whether medical or surgical, both by regulating the blood supply and also by the abolition of pain." [5]

We thus see that the explanations that can be offered for the miracles of the Bible are perhaps as varied as the miracles themselves. And in approaching the whole subject of miracles we feel, therefore, that we must first rid our minds of the *a priori* dogmatic prejudice in this connection and most of our difficulties will disappear. But whilst we note that some of the Bible miracles may be explained as being poetical or symbolical interpretations of certain occurrences, others again as "natural events" which are quite comprehensible in the light of modern scientific investigation, and some, it has been suggested, possibly as popular narratives which may have gradually clustered around the lives of these prophets, there are many of us who feel that we must protest with ourselves at the dry-as-dust program of science, the tendency of research, all of which seems to be in favor of *nil admirari,* and we are reminded of Keats' lines:

> Do not all charms fly
> At the mere touch of cold philosophy?
> There was an awful rainbow once in heaven:
> We know her woof, her texture; she is given
> In the dull catalogue of common things.

[5] See article by Dr. Hadfield, "The Influence of Hypnotic Suggestion on Inflammatory Conditions," *The Lancet,* Nov. 3, 1917.

We remember how Aristotle, in the *Ethics,* speaking of his "magnanimous man," says that "he is not apt to admire, for nothing is great to him." Nevertheless, the sense of wonder still exists in man and science has been unable to sweep the universe clean of the old elements on which wonder feeds. No scientific explanations, no cosmic theories, can take away the essential marvel of things as they are. When we account for the world by tracing all back to one original, revolving fire mist, condensing into planets and evolving in succession atmosphere, rocks, soil, water, plants, animals, and finally man, "Why," we must ask, "did the original motion work along these out of all possible lines, and what was there in the first impulsion that could produce effects? How did this blind force contrive to endow us with souls and sympathy and religion? Truly, the miracle of man, as conceived by the Hebrew cosmogonists is nothing as compared with the miracle of man as conceived by some scientists.

We see atoms, ions, and electrons, invisibly small and seemingly meaningless, display such wonderful likes and dislikes to and of each other, execute such complicated and wise movements in order to form larger and higher combinations of matter up to the organization of plants and animals, that we cannot help regarding this as miraculous. The naturalist cannot tell us how all this original mass of matter was first set in motion, but the scientist who leaves the domain of scientific investigation, and enters

that of philosophy, finds his solution in the theism of the Bible. It is God who has planned everything, and the interplay of natural forces, chemical affinity and gravitation, attraction and repulsion, are but the expression of His thoughts and a form of His will.

The theism of the Bible is thus the highest conception of God we have, for it teaches us concerning a God who is the cause of all activity in the natural forces of the universe, and who at the same time is free to make use of these forces at His pleasure for higher purposes of being. Surely the God of infinite resources cannot be confined to our mode of action, or prevented from changing the manner of His doings, if thereby He wills to bring to pass something of paramount importance. We thus see that it is not that Judaism presupposes miracles: rather do they presuppose the theistic philosophy of the Jew.

But we may ask how is our belief in miracles affected by the beliefs in the miraculous of other peoples and creeds. Let us consider this question in greater detail. Amongst primitive peoples there is a belief that the medicine man, or shaman, has the power to alter certain concrete events. Frazer [6] has pointed out that to primitive man the whole order of nature is elastic. It is elastic to the magician just as it is elastic to the divinity. The savage himself can alter events by means of the

[6] *Balder the Beautiful.*

fetish; whilst the medicine man can do so by means of the magical power which he possesses. This magical force, by means of which rain and sunshine can be produced or stopped, sickness cured, and the fertility of the soil increased, is mysterious to primitive man, and everything that is mysterious is miraculous. We think of the religions of all peoples —ancient and modern—whose history is full of the miraculous, the hills and dales, the brooks and the rivers, which are peopled with Gods, and of the events taking place there as the outcome of their wisdom and power. Even now we hear of excursions and pilgrimages being made to certain spots where the sick have been healed and various forms of cures effected, and we recall that violent disturbances in nature, such as cyclones, volcanic eruptions, and earthquakes, have all engendered the belief in a higher power. We are thus tempted to ask, "What is our attitude toward the miracles of all these different beliefs and creeds? Professor W. A. Brown has very beautifully replied to this by showing how the miracle-beliefs of all races are the means of strengthening our faith in God, for they testify man's refusal throughout the ages to regard Himself as alone in the Universe:

> After the simple faith of childhood has been banished by life's disillusioning experiences, the human soul longs for some refuge from which it cannot be dislodged, some guarantee that the

> sacred purpose to which its life has been consecrated is rooted in the Eternal; and in miracles man feels that his own resources have been enlarged. Whether it is the burning fire or the still small voice is of little consequence, for what matters is that there has suddenly appeared before our eyes a new form of energy and vitality, which has lifted him above the limitations of his narrow sphere of activity, and has reinforced his limited vitality and power. Man has suddenly been brought face to face with God and by His intervention has realized the greatness of the Divine.[7]

Whilst, therefore, many of us may not be prepared to accept a purely literal interpretation of many of the miraculous narratives of the Bible, we are by no means willing to give up our belief in miracles generally.

Furthermore, a comparison of biblical history with the religious literatures of other peoples strengthens our claim for the belief in the miraculous in the history of Israel. We feel that the dogmatism which regards miracles as incredible and attempts to exclude them from the historical records of the history of Israel leaves the whole biblical narrative so incoherent and unconvincing as to be capable of any kind of arbitrary explanation. For at least some of the miracles of the Bible differ entirely from the miracles of other peoples. They do not center

[7] *Harvard Theological Review*, July, 1915, p. 341.

round the life or personality of any particular individual; nor are they the doings of caprice as found in the religions and mythologies of other races. The omnipresent God so acts everywhere in nature that its stability is assured. The course of its unalterable laws are only broken at times in order to hasten the development of individuals and the progress of humanity. It is this which accounts for God's choice of Israel as the vehicle of His thoughts. The very appearance of Israel as His people thus called for the manifestation of special power and direction. The true God had to be made known and the confidence of Israel in Him had to be elicited and confirmed. It was only natural, therefore, that miracles should take place and wonderful occurrences be enacted. Every Jew will thus be prepared to agree that miracles accompanied the most momentous creative acts of God, such as the giving of the Torah and that which brought into being the nationality of Israel.

To the Jew who feels that belief in revelation is not only possible, but an essential part of his faith, there are two means of affording such revelation: an immediate revelation to each individual, or else a commission given by God to certain persons, accompanied by indisputable credentials of their being actually delegated by Him to make known His will. The former method would obviously be ineffectual, for either God must so powerfully influence the minds and affections of men as to

destroy the freedom of their will, or else it would fill the world with continual impostures and delusions from the various and contradictory pretences to revelations to which it would give rise. The latter method as taught by the Bible and Jewish philosophy is thus the most eligible as well as the most satisfactory.

The miracles of the Bible are thus not isolated physical phenomena or prodigies. They have a moral and spiritual sequence. We are agreed that science can investigate certain physical phenomena. It may even produce modifications in these, but it cannot explain the process. For example, it cannot explain why precisely a certain combination or arrangement of forces or conditions produces electricity. In fact, the whole process cannot be described as the creation of electricity, but merely the setting in motion of certain forces already possessing electrical power. Similarly, many of the miracles of the Bible have a clear relation to surrounding circumstances. They are distinct revelations of God or of God's nature in relation to the universe and man. His miracles are not for the purpose of rectifying His own mistakes, but are intended in this evil and disordered world as a public manifestation—much more effective than the more quietly working process—of the way in which everything is gradually being worked to the highest stage of perfection.

The power of God is such that He can act excep-

tionally under exceptional circumstances. There is no childish love of the marvelous: in fact, we have every justification for seeing considerable reserve in the exhibition of the miraculous in the Bible, but when necessity arises God, whose power is not limited to natural law or to the uniformity of custom, innovates upon the normal physical order. But all these variations of natural law are never intended for any pure exhibition of power. It is the means by which God works in the interest of the moral order of the universe and the method by which He shows His protest against the monstrous disorder of sin.

It is to be regretted that so many Jewish theologians have been attempting in recent years to eliminate the miraculous entirely from Jewish history. We are prepared to agree with those theologians who emphasize the immanence of God and argue that all events are supernatural since all are produced by or are particular expressions of the immanent God. But we cannot help pointing out that we are also in danger of so impoverishing the idea of God that its value as a religious conception is reduced to a minimum. True, God is immanent in the world; He is no far-off deity, separate from His works. Not a single thing that happens is independent of Him, but that does not mean that He is identical with the world or limited by it. He is present in the world, not because He is identical with it, but because He is *Master* of it; the universe

is pervaded and enveloped by the mystery of His will. We cannot accept the almost deistic view that God's eternal plan has been achieved and His creative activity exhausted, so that He is now a mere spectator and the world a God-forsaken machine.

The boundless complexity of His universe should never allow us to conceal the simple fact of His own personality. A deity conceived in the way some of our present-day theologians suggest could never provide comfort to the oppressed soul, for if God is but a name for the totality of things, then when we possess Him we possess nothing that we did not have before. We cannot appeal to God when the world treats us ill, for we have already had our God. But our God is not the God of hill or dale, cloud or sunshine, life or death, nor is God another name for the totality of existing things, but a free and living force. We feel that we *can* appeal from nature to nature's God, and therefore if we are to have implicit faith in Him we must believe that He can work miracles.

It is of interest to note that many Jewish scholars who are constantly emphasizing that they cannot accept any of the miracles of the Bible usually emphasize the importance of prophetism in Israel and argue that it was due to the influence of the "personality" of the prophets that Israel's religion owed its persistent vigor, its perpetual upward tendency and the growing purity and loftiness of its fundamental conceptions. But what is "per-

sonality"? In spite of all our advances in psychology we have not yet succeeded in fathoming its abysmal depths. Whether we say that the prophetic genius of these leaders of Israel was due to a "superabundance of energy and enthusiasm, and overwhelming personality," or to a "prophetic instinct," we are by no means nearer an explanation of these terms. We must remember that prophetic enthusiasm is something more than mere energy. It is energy conscious of a potential difference. We are told by psychologists that "freedom and creation constitute the secret of personality, and these again are caused by a devotion to an attraction for and emancipation from natural and accidental termination toward logical truth and correctness, which arises from the deeper spiritual levels of our being." But how are we to explain all the forces which act in this way upon certain men? There seems to be one explanation and one only.

> The evidence for miracles is the same as that which leads us to believe in personality in any form, whether in ourselves, in others, or in the great Unseen Spirit at the heart of things, whose nature we are constrained to believe is in some true sense akin to ours. So long as we believe in persons anywhere, or for any reason, we shall continue to believe in miracles, for by a person we mean essentially a miracle-worker. Personality means initiative, enterprise, but at the same time interpretation and fellowship. A

person is a being who is able not simply to bring new things to pass, but at the same time, to make the new he does or inspires the bond that links him to some kindred spirit. And the contact that unites these two poles of the life of spirit and fuses them into a single experience is miracle. So stated, miracle is a part of the larger question of theism, and in the last resort, stands or falls with it. If you could disprove the existence of a personal God, you would disprove miracles. So long as faith in such a God exists, miracle will remain, for miracle is the way in which the personal God communicates His will to man.

"Every great personality," says Professor Harnack, "reveals a part of what it is only when seen in those it influences. The more powerful a personality a man possesses, and the more he takes hold of the inner life of others, the less can the sum total of what he is be known by what he says himself and does."

But, furthermore, as we Jews contemplate our past, and the contributions which we, as a people, have made toward the forward progress of humanity, as we consider many of the "incredible events" of the history of our people in the setting in which they occurred and the consequences which followed from them, we find ourselves almost literally compelled to describe them as miracles. As Jews whose whole history is stranger than fiction,

and who have witnessed the hand of God working amongst us throughout the ages, we cannot help feeling that there is no reason for us to question the Bible narrative, for example, that God *did* lead His people with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with signs and wonders (Deut. xxvi. 8).

But whether we are prepared to accept the literal accounts of certain Bible miracles or not, we must always bear in mind that the real miracle of the Bible lies elsewhere than in the accounts of separate miraculous performances. It is to be found in the strong sense of divine presence in the world and divine guidance in the affairs of the universe, in the records of spiritual experience and aspiration, in the great phenomena of prophetism, and in the development of a spiritual religion which is the basis of our modern faith.

Forget not that we live in an historical age, in which everybody must show his credentials from the past. The Bible is our patent of nobility granted to us by the Almighty God, and if we disown the Bible, leaving it to the tender mercies of a Wellhausen, Stade and Duhm and other beautiful souls working away at diminishing the "nimbus of the chosen people" the world will disown us.

SCHECHTER: *Seminary Addresses.*

CHAPTER V

JUDAISM AND THE HIGHER CRITICISM

Various types of Biblical criticism—Lower criticism—Higher criticism—Traditional Judaism and the higher criticism—Higher criticism and archeology—Differences of style no criterion as to different authorship—Schechter and the higher criticism—Tradition has in itself a scientific value and does not necessarily mean the opposite of scientific criticism—Genius cannot exist without some possibility of social appreciation—The unity of the Pentateuch.

Let us now proceed to consider the question of biblical criticism and its influence on traditional Jewish thought. Many of us who have been brought up in traditional Jewish homes no doubt resent the attitude toward the Bible adopted by the new schools of critical scholars. We have been taught from childhood to regard the Bible as a divinely inspired literature, which reached, roughly speaking, from the time of Moses down to the time of Malachi in the fifth century of the common era. Within that period we had at the outset the Pentateuch written by Moses, the historical books compiled by those who followed him, the Psalter very largely composed by David, Proverbs from the pen of Solomon, and various prophetic books written by

the authors whose names they bear. It probably never occurred to us that there might be any doubt whatever attached either to the traditional authorship of the books or to the statements which they enshrine. But whilst we have been cherishing these views, scholars in Europe and America have been at work upon the literature of the Bible, challenging all the ancient traditions and attempting to destroy many of the sacred beliefs of our childhood days. We have heard of Colenso, Robertson Smith, and Wellhausen, and we have noted how the higher critical school has been attracting many scholars to its banner. The criticism of the Bible by modern scholars today may be divided into three classes. First there is the criticism which seeks to determine the exact text of its author. This is called textual criticism or Lower Criticism, not because it is an inferior type of criticism nor yet because it demands less intellectual power or technical skill on the part of those who practice it, but because it deals with the primary part of the subject. We cannot satisfactorily investigate our documents till we have convinced ourselves of the accuracy of their text.

When we turn to the Bible we find that the different Hebrew manuscripts, preserve essentially the same text throughout. This is because the divergent readings have largely been suppressed and a standard text has been formed so that the various readings which would have been so valuable in helping us by comparison to work back to the

original text have been almost entirely obliterated. It is fortunate that we have certain translations, notably that into Greek known as the Septuagint, which at times assist us in understanding the meaning of the Hebrew text. Yet since this translation was itself made only shortly before the common era, through the many centuries that in some instances elapsed between the original composition of a book and its translation, there was abundant time for numerous corruptions to come into the text and, therefore, for a great deal of uncertainty to attach to what an author originally wrote. Nevertheless, one need not be disheartened by this. Although the text in detail is frequently uncertain, still in the main we may say that the text of the Bible is tolerably well preserved to us, and if we are content with not demanding too much, we can read it with a very fair reliance that on the whole we are really in touch with what the authors actually wrote.

Matters become more revolutionary when we pass from the lower to the higher criticism, which deals with the question of authorship and structure of the books. Now many non-Jewish scholars do not accept the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and regard it as consisting of four main documents each of which, according to them, has a history behind it. The earliest of these they assign to the eighth or ninth centuries B.C.E. These are the most interesting and fascinating parts of the Pentateuch; they contain those stories which charmed us by their

romance and beauty when we were children and still cast their literary and spiritual spell upon us now that we have come to riper years. Next, the later document which forms the nucleus of the present Book of Deuteronomy is assigned to a date either in the reign of Manasseh or that of Josiah and is identified with the Book of the law which was discovered by Hilkiah in the Temple and formed the basis of the great reformation inaugurated by Josiah. And then, finally, the great section commonly known as the Priestly Document, which contains the greater part of the legislation of Israel, the document which embraces not a little of Genesis and Exodus, of Numbers and Joshua, together with the whole of Leviticus, while including some historical narratives, is, for the most part, concerned in laying down the ecclesiastical constitution under which the Hebrews lived. This document, after prolonged discussion among critics, has now been fixed to a period after the time of Ezekiel, on whose legislation in the last nine chapters it is supposed to rest, and it is roughly dated about 500 B.C.E.

We are now tempted to ask how far traditional Judaism is in accord with the results of higher criticism. To this we have two replies. In the first place, we believe traditional Judaism to be entirely independent of the results of higher criticism. We must emphasize that Judaism has two foundations —the Talmud in addition to the Bible—and, as we shall see later in our discussion on Jewish tradition,

the roots of Judaism are driven too far into the core of Jewish life as it has been lived for generations for it to be affected by any new theory as to the structure of one of its foundations. But furthermore, whilst it may perhaps be legitimate for a student to accept some of the latest theories of higher criticism as working hypotheses in his biblical studies, they do not affect in any way our attachment to traditional Judaism, for these theories are by no means final and to many of us absolutely unacceptable.

We must bear in mind that expert opinion cannot always be accepted implicitly. It is true that the influence of the higher critics is keenly felt in all high places and most of our modern commentaries on the Bible are written by them. But we ought not to forget the numerous scholars of distinction who have most skilfully championed the authenticity of the Bible and who are beginning to make themselves felt against the very powerful opposition with which they have to meet.

The higher critics have no right to assume the attitude that one who does not accept their views is hopelessly out of date, for many of their dogmatic assertions have been discredited by archeological research. In fact, some of the leading Oriental archeologists such as Sayce, Hommel, and Halévy did not accept the "settled" results of the higher critical school.

It used to be argued that so extended a literary

production as the Pentateuch at the very rise of the people of Israel is not believable and points much more to a time when the arts of reading and writing were widely diffused. Recent archeological discoveries have shown, however, how utterly valueless this argument is against the authenticity of the Pentateuch. For during the last century, particularly, there have been discovered in Babylonia huge libraries containing thousands of clay tablets of historical material produced long before the Hebrews left Egypt.

But apart from the views of the leading archeologists one ought to refer also to the works of such scholars as Eerdmans, the successor of Kuenen at the University of Leyden, and Harold M. Wiener, a Jewish scholar whose knowledge of law has proved him of service in pointing out the reckless statements of the critics on the legal portions of the Pentateuch. As far back as 1879 Dr. David Hoffman of the Rabbinical Seminary at Berlin began to subject the theories of Hellhausen to a critical examination and showed many of their weaknesses. These are embodied in his later work published in 1904.

The erroneous conclusions of the critics are due in most instances to the fact that, although many of them are undoubtedly excellent scholars, they do not possess the first-hand knowledge of the archeologists. As a result they approach the Bible with Western minds and from an Occidental standpoint,

and the views which they put forward to explain many difficulties and apparent discrepancies in Old Testament literature are thus based on a conception of law and literature which is essentially Western and which is fundamentally wrong when applied to a Semitic people like the Hebrews. For example, the differences of style which exists in the Pentateuch are no criteria whatever as to differences of authorship such as the higher critics seem to infer. Wiener rightly points out that if the Indian Penal Code which was drafted by Macaulay were contrasted with some of his speeches and ballads similar divergencies of vocabulary and rhythm will at once become apparent. Surely, it is only to be expected that Moses should have used a different style in delivering an exhortation to the people to be loyal and faithful to their religious principles from that used when dealing with laws of sacrifice.

There are so many classical and modern writers whose works show differences of style and presumably, therefore, differences of authorship, although we have every evidence to the contrary, that we cannot help feeling how preposterous is this argument of differences of style when applied as a means of analyzing the Pentateuch into various documents.

We may imagine a school of critics in 3000 C.E. who, directing their attention to the writings of Milton, will conclude that the same hand is not seen in "Paradise Lost," "The Lycidas" and "Paradise Regained." They may point out the dramatic

force and creative imagination of the "Paradise Lost" which seems to be lacking in the "Paradise Regained." They may point out how different appears the tone of "Lycidas" from either of them. And yet the name on the title page showing an unbroken tradition will outweigh all such opinions. It is interesting to note also that the commentaries on the Gallic War (50 B.C.E.) attributed to Caesar are written throughout in the third person. It is only the title that indicates its author. In fact, in the fifth century, two classical writers (Sidonius and Orosius) only knew the work by its title and, curiously enough, they mistook it to be commentaries on Caesar's Gallic War written by Suetonius. The MS. is a register of contemporaneous tradition and the strongest evidence for us is that the book has come down to us as the commentaries of Julius Caesar. Another example is a work of the Roman historian Tacitus, *Dialogus de Oratoribus* which differs in style and mood from his other writings and is lacking in his later bitterness. This has caused many scholars to regard Pliny the younger, Suetonius and Quintillian as its author. But, on the whole, there is hardly anyone whom we might credit with sufficient talent and character to be the author of the *Dialogus,* and there is now a general agreement that Tacitus wrote the book, for which the title of the MS. as a register of contemporaneous tradition is the strongest evidence.

Again, in our attempts to probe the meaning

of the Bible we must not forget that its language is to a great extent the language of poetry and imagination and not that of science and legal precision. Centuries elapsed between the time that Hebrew was a spoken language and its recent revival, and we are therefore frequently confronted with difficulties in our efforts to understand the true meaning of a Hebrew idiom. This explains why many Rabbinical interpretations which to us seem so unnatural and fanciful were regarded by our ancestors as quite consistent and in perfect harmony with the meaning of the Hebrew text.

Nor can we accept the usage of the divine names in the Pentateuch as a means of separating the text into various documents. A new school of scholars has recently arisen, led by Dahse and Wiener, which proves conclusively that before the divine names can be used for critical purposes the genuineness of the Massoretic text must be carefully examined. The versions of the Hebrew Bible often disagree with the Hebrew, and in many instances, particularly in the case of the Septuagint, *Elohim* is presupposed where the Tetragrammaton is given in Hebrew, and vice versa. Wellhausen has admitted this to be a sore point, and yet it is remarkable how utterly regardless of this necessary preliminary investigation the higher critics are, although they are always ready to assail the trustworthiness of the Massoretic text when it suits their purpose. Some modern scholars agree with the Rabbinic interpre-

tation of the usage of the divine names in the Bible as representing different aspects of God's essence. Professor Green states that *Adonai* denotes what God is in and to Israel; *Elohim* what he is to other nations as well. . . . *"Elohim* is the God of Creation and of Providence. . . . *Adonai* is the God of Revelation and of Redemption.

As to the theory that the different codes show different stages of religious development Baxter, in his work, *Sanctuary and Sacrifice,* has utterly demolished this as well as the views put forward by Wellhausen in his Prolegomena. Even Professor Toy, in his *Judaism and Christianity,* points out clearly that the law in general which the modern critical scholars regard as "legalistic and external" had larger consequences than its mere details would suggest, and he proceeds to tell how we can learn from the sayings of the great teachers of the second century that there was no discrimination in the legal school between the ceremonial and the moral. Both were of equal import and equal significance. If, as we are repeatedly being told, legalism was so influential in suppressing the spiritual side of religion, how are we to explain the fact that in Ezekiel —the great legalistic prophet of the Old Testament —the ideas of individual responsibility as well as the creation of a new heart are emphasized much more than by those of his prophetic predecessors? It is our firm conviction that just as within recent years Christian scholars have come to realize that

the Pharisees of the times of Jesus can no longer be regarded as the hypocrites they are represented in the New Testament, so the time is not far distant when as a result of advance in Hebrew and biblical scholarship it will be generally agreed that the higher critical views now held by so many scholars as working hypotheses in their explanations of biblical exegesis are untenable.

Finally, there is one very unfortunate aspect of the attitude of the higher critical school which, as Jews, we cannot help noting. Schechter, many years ago, described higher criticism as "the higher anti-Semitism which burns the soul though it leaves the body unhurt." There is no doubt that Schechter's strong statement was in many respects perfectly justifiable. This does not mean, of course, that every higher critic is an anti-Semite; that would be absurd. But an examination of the writings of Wellhausen, Friedrich Delitzch, and some of the other higher critical scholars shows that the theory—although it is regarded as a purely scientific investigation—has an undercurrent of anti-Jewish bias which recommends it to some European scholars. There is a feeling that the relative importance of the New Testament has become enhanced through the attacks upon the integrity of the Old Testament, and this in itself has caused these higher critical doctrines to win such popularity amongst many Gentile scholars. It is certainly unfortunate that the anti-Semitism of scholars of the type of Wellhausen and Delitzsch

should be refracted through the love and reverence which English and American theologians have for the Bible, who, whilst excising and expurgating the hatred contained in the writings of their German teachers, leave us with the fruits of their investigations which are so unsound from a scientific point of view and so unacceptable from a Jewish standpoint.

Let us Jews bear in mind that the difficulties of the Bible noted by the higher critical scholars were raised by the Rabbis of the Talmudic period and by their successors. The attitude, however, of many of these commentators toward these problems was much more acceptable even from a purely scholarly point of view than that of many of our "scientific" scholars. Thinkers of the type of Maimonides, Nachmanides, Ibn Ezra, and Kimchi were true biblical critics. They had a complete mastery of Hebrew, which to them was a living language, and were well acquainted with the ancient manners and local customs with which a large portion of Bible history is connected. And as a result of the application of their knowledge, philosophy, critical acumen, and inexorable criticism the Bible appeared like gold from the furnace.

When we Jews refer to our traditional view of the Bible we do not mean to infer that its attitude is opposed to criticism. Tradition does not necessarily mean the opposite of scientific criticism, for tradition has in itself a scientific value. We feel, however,

that no true scientific criticism has yet been forthcoming which can replace the traditional, unprejudiced view we hold with reference to the composition and authorship of the Pentateuch.

In fact, the whole history of the Hebrews goes to confirm how favorable amongst them was the spirit for the veracity of literary tradition and for the conservation of written documents. In the time of Moses, particularly, we read of the men whom he selected to settle the smaller matters of judgment (Ex. xxviii.) and the Seventy Elders by whom he was assisted. A contemporary literary spirit is shown by the Book of the Wars of the Lord (Num. xxi. 14) and "The Book of Jasher" (Josh. x. 13), which whenever its final recension took place contained ancient poems and a well song (Num. xxi. 17, 18). Popular national education had its founder in Moses (Deut. iv. 5, 2, 9, 29); every father was to instruct his children and write the great commandments on his doorposts (Deut. vi. 7-9), but the special office of teaching was placed in the hands of the Levites (Deut. xxxiii. 10).

There is hardly any period in the history of the Hebrews when traces of careful literary instinct seemed to be lacking. The literary spirit existed during the troubles and the disunited times of the Judges, as may be seen from the fine poem of the fifth chapter of that book, and the age of Solomon was also one of literary production. In fact, the golden age of David and Solomon seems to have

been a period of exceptionally great intellectual activity. The birth of psalmody and proverbial philosophy dates from this time, and this is only to be expected, for all peoples on reaching their meridian of stability grow high in aspiration and commence researches into their origins and the codification and revision of their religious and legalistic literature. The schools of the prophets were continued till the Exile, and there were students of the ancient records in the courts of the Temple.

It seems incredible to us that such narratives as those recorded in the Pentateuch, with all their local coloring, geographical atmosphere, and abundance and particularity of detail, should have been compiled centuries later from fragments differentiated by difference of age and of standpoint, by writers who used them at their will and were entirely ignorant of the events which they recorded.

To us the whole theory of the successive origin and gradual growth of the different codes of the Pentateuchal law is opposed to the explicit statements of the Pentateuch itself, and it is utterly inconsistent with the history on which it is professedly based. Both the book found in the Temple in the reign of Josiah and that brought forward and read by Ezra after the Exile are expressly declared to have been not recent productions but the law of Moses. It is simply preposterous for us to be asked to believe that a body of laws never before heard of could have been imposed upon the people

as though they had been given by Moses centuries previously, and that they could have been accepted and obeyed notwithstanding the fact that they imposed new and serious burdens upon the people and set aside established usages to which they were devotedly attached.

Again, historical experience proves conclusively that genius cannot exist without some possibility of social appreciation. There is a certain degree of action and reaction in the production and influence of great men. A Beethoven or a Mozart is an impossible product in a savage or primitive nation. Their very existence implies some culture and appreciation —no matter how low the level may be—in the nation that produced them. Similarly, the prophets and poets of our own days have won for themselves distinction by enunciating truths which we accept as self evident, by proclaiming great principles which our deepened insight perceives to constitute the basis of all morality, and by creating forms of beauty to which our heightened and purified sense looks up as a standard of ideal perfection. And this could not be unless the intuitions of genius call forth echoes from the depths of our soul, awaking dormant faculties which can apprehend if they cannot create, which can respond if they cannot originate.

It is impossible for us to believe that the towering genius and ascendancy of Moses were entirely the creation of a later age. For surely the great mag-

nanimous Moses could not have existed in a social vacuum. There must have been some kind of social appreciation, and the greater the influence, the greater the education of the circle, the greater the guarantee of the preservation of the writings and the work which he wrote or authorized as his. Surely, the men who knew Moses would not have attributed to him a work of which he was not the author.

We cannot help feeling that the British and American schools of biblical criticism lean too much upon a German authority which at the source is tainted with prejudices of which the existence is unquestioned. If the traditional view of the authorship of the Pentateuch can be proved to be entirely incorrect by unprejudiced scientific evidence, then it certainly ought to be laid aside. For the present, however, no such unprejudiced evidence has been forthcoming, and history would thus sink into hopeless scepticism if it would attach no importance to tradition.

We are prepared to agree that certain portions of the Pentateuch may possibly have been added later than the time of Moses. For example, the Rabbis suggested long ago that the last eight verses of Deuteronomy recording the death of Moses were written by Joshua. This, however, does not prevent our right to maintain that the main body of the Pentateuch in its present form is a unity, one continuous work, the product of a single writer. The real question resolves itself into whether the Penta-

teuch is a continuous product from a single pen, whatever may have been the sources from which the material is derived.

Professor Green has well analyzed the whole problem of the unity of the Pentateuch in the following words:

> By the unity of the Pentateuch is meant that it is, in its present form, one continuous work, the product of a single writer. This is not opposed to the idea of his having before him *written sources in any number or variety from which he may have drawn his* materials, provided the final composition was his own. It is of no consequence, so far as our present inquiry is concerned, whether the facts related were learned from preëxisting writings or from credible tradition, or from his own personal knowledge or from immediate divine revelation. From whatever source the materials may have been gathered, if all has been cast into the mold of the writer's own thoughts, presented from his point of view and arranged upon a plan and method of his own, the work possesses the unity which we maintain. Thus Bancroft's *History of the United States* rests upon a multitude of authorities which its author consulted in the course of its preparation; the facts which it records were drawn from a great variety of preëxisting written sources; and yet as we possess it, it is the product of one writer, who first made himself thoroughly acquainted with his

> subject and then elaborated it in his own language and according to his own preconceived plans. It would have been very different if his care had simply been to weave together his authorities in the form of a continuous narrative, retaining in all cases their exact language, but incorporating one into another or supplementing one by another so as to string the several sources together in the form of a continuous narrative. In this case it would not have been Bancroft's history. He would have been really the compiler of a work consisting of a series of extracts from various authors.[1]

Finally, let us recall the words of one distinguished scholar who rightly says: "The questions raised by literary criticism in this century have, of course, to be met and they have their interest. But, after all, to tell the plain truth, they are mere child's play compared with the real problem presented to the heart and mind by the Bible itself. They may be the higher criticism, but they are very far from being the highest; for they do not touch the ultimate realities with which the Scriptures deal and they arise in too great a degree from mere insensibility to such realities or from failure to appreciate them."

[1] Essay on "The Unity of the Pentateuch," by Henry Green in *Anti-Higher Criticism,* by L. W. Munhall.

Where but from heaven, could men unskilled in arts,
In several ages born, in several parts,
Weave such agreeing truths? or how, or why,
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?
Unasked their pains, ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gain and martyrdom their price.

DRYDEN.

The God consciousness comes to one person through one faculty, to others through another, and to some through no discoverable special channel, but rather through the whole mind in its ordinary occupations.

COE: *Religion of a Mature Mind.*

CHAPTER VI

IS THE BIBLE INSPIRED?

Freedom of natural expression in the composition of the books of the Bible—Inspiration and revelation—Inspiration of man by man—Book revelation—Inspiration varies according to circumstances—In spite of the diversity of authorship of the various books of the Bible they all represent the most elevated conceptions of the nature and character of God—Verbal inspiration.

MANY Jews would say that, if a man has come in any way whatever to a devout belief in the sacredness and inspiration of the Bible, he ought to be left undisturbed in his comfortable faith, and that to unsettle his mind by requiring of him the reasons of his confidence would be a most reprehensible act sure to cause much anxiety and entail unnecessary mental labor.

To tell a man that he must believe in the Bible because I do, or because the Bible is true, or because he will be lost if he does not, is to show a poverty of resource which is truly pitiable; and yet, what else when stripped of verbiage would the replies of many Jews amount to? Remember that inquiry is not confined to unbelievers. Can we not all recount instances of certain friends whom we have known

for years as most devout Jews and with whom we may have even worshiped at times suddenly informing us that they are anxious to regain their unquestioning reliance on and belief in the Bible? How often do we meet with men who after having felt themselves secure for some time have suddenly fallen victims to infidelity and have left Judaism entirely? Do we not meet regularly in our daily life men and women who at one time were stanch adherents of traditional Judaism, and in whom, for some reason we cannot explain, a fall has taken place which is sudden, complete, and irretrievable. How are we to explain the fact which we see daily of Jews whose religious fortifications seemed secure and impregnable falling before the merest rustle of wind? Is it not due to the fact that many of these so-called firm believers never even felt it necessary to cast a glance at their fortifications? One cannot believe that men should suddenly surrender faith without a struggle unless their faith never had any solid foundation.

The thinking Jew is often tempted to explain how God inspired the Bible or how he exerted an influence upon the writers of the various books. This is of course a matter of which man can know little indeed and concerning which he can only speculate. God certainly did not control his writers in a mechanical way. His control of the authors of the various books was not similar to that of a boy controlling his jumping toys. In this sacred work

there must have been the freedom of natural expression, as the writers themselves show in their respective books. We are told by the different prophets of the Bible that God spoke to them. What this expression really means we cannot tell, we can only conjecture. It is possible that they themselves did not know how they were affected by a higher spirit.

If God wishes to make Himself known to man He must take the initiative. This is the meaning of the terms "inspiration" and "revelation." God is said to reveal; that is, to uncover some piece of truth about Himself. God "inspires"; that is, breathes into men the power to discover and understand the truth that He is revealing.

We must remember that the biblical story is written under the idea of an inspired arrangement in human affairs. No one thing is to be judged as occurring alone. It is merely an item in a connected scene. Separately viewed, a thing may seem contrary to all our ideas of morals. "It is the backward thrust of the piston. But the backward thrust, by the wise combination in the mechanism of the engine, is just as helpful in propulsion as is the forward thrust." God is the great factor in the history of the Bible. His plan is a series of events under one perpetual superintendence. The early going-down to Egypt was, when seen alone, a backward step, but as seen historically today it was a splendid move. The captivity at Babylon helped the theistic idea into world-wide prominence. As

with the larger, so with the smaller steps. As with nations, so with individuals.

As we have noted, the word "inspire" literally means to breathe into, to infuse a supernatural idea or life into the human mind. By the inspiration of the Bible we mean that God breathed into the mind of its authors its ideas and its great spiritual content. But we cannot tell how He prepared the mind of the writers so that there was harmony between the human and the divine. We can no more describe in detail the mystery of divine inspiration than we can explain the secret of the communication of ideas or of the communication of life. All we can say is that the writer is suddenly overcome by a certain emotion. Certain feelings seem to overwhelm him and he feels he must give expression to ideas which fill his mind, but the cause of it all he cannot explain.

The inspiration of man by man is a recognized fact today and we are all agreed that man is inspirable. Just as God has endowed some men with health which He has denied to others, so He has selected certain men whom he has inspired with genius in certain directions. We see daily how great masters of thought who lived centuries ago have impressed themselves by spoken or written words on large sections of the human race. They still seem to stir others to think. Plato and Aristotle, Dante and Milton, Homer and Vergil still rule millions of men from their urns, and their audience seems to grow

larger with the increasing years of the world's history. Philosophers, poets, and statesmen who have long passed out of earthly existence still speak to the world and lead nations. And whenever some gifted man arises today who can succeed in touching the chords that are waiting to break into music in every human heart, the world of mind vibrates anew.

Now, surely, if ordinary mortals can succeed in influencing the minds and hearts of men with human inspiration, are we not warranted in expecting God to grant us divine inspiration? The capacity for religious inspiration differs amongst races as amongst individuals. That God should have selected the Hebrews, the foremost monotheistic believers of the world, and should have given special revelation as to the meaning of historic events and as to the meaning of moral truth to special souls among them, and then should have given also special inspiration to record these events and these revelations, is surely not beyond the bounds of our comprehension.

We can understand that God has divinely inspired men who had the "genius for religion," and that the result was a series of books written indeed by men, each writer exhibiting his own peculiar style and, equally, each under the guidance consciously or unconsciously of special, divine inspiration.

Now, whilst many people can understand revelation by word of mouth, they seem to have difficulty in understanding the meaning of book revelation. We have already noted that there are numerous

examples in literature of what may be called human inspiration in which a man of remarkable genius impresses his thoughts on others so deeply that a whole generation of writers and speakers has felt his preponderating influence. To explain how this force of inspiration acts we might take the work of a painter and analyze the way in which it effects its influence in inspiring those who behold it. A painter has a great thought and then gives expression to it on canvas: with his brush and paints he represents on canvas the thought by which he has been inspired. A person standing in front of the picture where the light falls on it sees a number of colored pigments laid roughly on a canvas. The picture is purely objective, but its reflection through the transmitting light waves falls on the retina of the eye, and the optic nerve transmits it again to the brain. The picture is transmitted into thought and we are thus able to get at the message by which the artist was originally inspired. Why can we not understand inspiration acting in a similar way in the case of a divinely inspired author?

The fact that God should have revealed himself to man through a great book is not beyond our comprehension. It is not difficult for us to understand that God should teach man made in His image by a book. Previous to His revelation by the aid of human literature He used innumerable means in order to reveal Himself to man. He made the world not only for man's dwelling place but for the mani-

festation of His own wisdom and power. "All thy works praise thee," cried the devout Hebrew singer of olden times. We have only to look at some of the beauties of this world to realize the wise artistic force that must have brought them into creation. If architecture and sculpture and painting and all the beauties of nature reveal the work of God through the genius of man and are in a sense His handwriting, we can easily bring ourselves to believe that the handwriting of God through the handwriting of men in the forms of human literature is within the bounds of the possible. If we believe human language to be a special gift of God bestowed that man might speak not only to his Creator but to his fellow men, then that power of consecutive thought which lies back of human language and finds in it its expression can be utilized in this divine wisdom by furnishing such a book to the world.

Inspiration like every other divine gift varies according to circumstances. We can imagine to ourselves at one time the sacred historian, unconsciously, it may be, yet freely seizing on those facts in the history of the past which were the turning points of a nation's spiritual progress, gathering the details which combine to give the truest picture of each crisis, and grouping all according to the laws of a marvelous symmetry which in aftertimes might symbolize their hidden meaning. Or we may see the prophet gazing intently on the great struggle going on around him, discerning the spirits of men

and the springs of national life till the relations of time no longer exist in his vision—till all strife is referred to the final conflict of good and evil foreshadowed in the great judgments of the world. Another, perhaps, looks within his own heart, and as a new light is poured over its inmost depths, his devotion finds expression in songs of personal penitence and thanksgiving, in confession of sin and declarations of righteousness, whilst another actually records the letter of the divine law which he feels he has received directly from God inscribed upon tablets of stone or spoken face to face. Thus all the different writings taken together may be considered one harmonious message of God spoken in many parts and in many manners by men to men; the distinct lessons of individual ages reaching from one time to all time.

In our study of the Bible we must not forget that the books of which it is composed were written in different countries under variant forms of national life and of civilization, and even in different languages. The Book of Job has as a background the archaic life of the Eastern desert; the historical books, the Psalms and Proverbs, and several of the prophecies were written in Palestine; whilst the Book of Ezekiel was written in Babylonia during the captivity. Hence, although the writers concerned in the production of the Bible were of one race, it is difficult to conceive circumstances and associations more diversified than those in which they sev-

erally wrote—at one time living like Moses under the shadow of the monuments of Egypt and trained in the learning and art of her civilization, at other times in the wild freedom and grandeur of the desert and amid the simple manners of wandering tribes, and again at the capital of the Babylonian empire in the height of its luxury and splendor, or in the comparative seclusion of Judea among an agricultural people of plain habits and tastes and of no literary aspirations.

Thus, amid the wide contrast of place, society, government, and religion, and in contact with all the leading forms of civilization and empire, these different writers produced the books that compose our Bible. And yet, in spite of this diversity of authorship, is it not remarkable that they all represent most elevated conceptions of the nature and the character of God, and some of these the highest conceptions of the Supreme Being that the human mind has ever formed? Everywhere in the Bible God appears as a spirit having life in Himself and the author of life to all creatures. His power, His wisdom, His knowledge—in a word, all the attributes of His Being are eternal. The oneness of God in His Being is taught, or rather is assumed and recognized, by all the writers of the Bible in all their books. The account of the creation, the ten commandments, or of Isaiah's vision of the divine majesty all represent God as an Infinite and Almighty Spirit. "Before the heavens were brought

forth or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world . . . even from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God." Again, His holiness is represented everywhere as His crowning excellence—the sum of His moral attributes, the very essence and glory of his character. This view of the divine character which is uniform throughout all the books of the Bible is also peculiar to it. It is not borrowed from any other book or from any other religion.

Some philosophers of Greece and Rome—notably Socrates, Plato, Cicero, and Epictetus—approached the conception of one spiritual God infinite in his nature and perfect in his attributes. Yet their best thoughts concerning God were crude and vague and they themselves were in doubt of their own speculation. In all the literature of antiquity, the books that compose the Bible are the only writings that unequivocally teach that there is but one God, a pure Spirit whose nature is infinite and whose attributes are perfect. And when we examine the ideas of God amongst the most cultivated of ancient nations, such as Egypt, Babylon, and Greece, we find that their mythology nowhere approached the idea of a God of perfect holiness so essential to a right conception of a Supreme Being. Their gods were either distorted images of human beings or photographs of human characters with virtues and defects intensely and even coarsely magnified.

With such imperfect and unworthy views of God continually before them in the literature and the

religions of all mankind, how came it to pass that these men of an obscure race, some shepherds or husbandmen, others scholars acquainted with the theology of Egypt and Babylon—men, some of whom were captives under idolatrous nations and others officials in courts where idol worship was conducted with state magnificence—how came it to pass that these men, writing centuries apart at such diverse times and in such diverse manners, have given to the world a conception of God in His spirituality, His eulogy, His infinity and, above all, in His holiness which no other minds had attained to and which is confessedly the highest possible conception of the Supreme Being? We can account for this intellectual and moral phenomenon—without a parallel in literature—only if we believe that God spoke through these writers; that He was revealed unto them so that they discerned His character, realized His presence, were moved by His spirit.

We are justified, therefore, in arguing that the plan upon which the Bible as a whole is constructed and apparently has been designed is one of our best proofs of its divine inspiration, for it is certainly such as human wisdom could not have arranged or wrought. We see that although it was written by different authors, removed from one another by centuries of time and by changed conditions of society, it possesses a most singular unity—a unity not of sameness but of harmony; a unity of plan and orderly development—an organic unity. It is this

organic unity of the Bible in addition to the unique sayings and utterances of exceptional value which it contains that constitutes its characteristic feature and shows it to be divinely inspired. It is obvious that not all parts of the Bible, any more than all parts of any other book, are of equal spiritual value. The genealogical and numerical lists of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah cannot be ranked intrinsically as high as the prophecies of Isaiah. But for all that, seeing that they are all intrinsic parts of an organic whole, and have a place which cannot be dispensed with in the organic whole, it follows that if this whole body of writings is to be regarded as the word of God, these part portions must also be of that Word.

Our conclusion, therefore, is that the Bible cannot be regarded apart from divine inspiration, for a hand is seen in it as in no other history which has come down to us across the separating centuries. The events themselves and the book that records them shows something unaccountable when regarded apart from God's inspiration. Its one special purpose is the development of God's revelation of Himself, and those who miss this message running through its pages are thus compelled to invent all kinds of theories to account for the prevalence in the history of Israel of ideas far in advance of what was possible by any merely natural evolution. In the words of one writer, "Such conceptions of God and of man's duty to Him, such ideas of moral

righteousness, such an outlook upon the material and spiritual universe are long centuries in advance of what any merely naturalistic student would expect to find. And so those who have set up the standard of natural moral developments have wished to re-date the books and to discover for them far later authors who wrote in far later times."

If we do not accept the belief in the divine inspiration of the Bible, how are we to account for these advanced moral conceptions which it represents? They cannot be explained as having grown from any natural germ or as being due to the spirit of the age, for the authors of these works saw far beyond their own nationality and times.

Let us consider the meaning of the term "verbal inspiration," as understood by the modern mind. To many the use of this expression is an occasion of scoffing. They persist in thinking of verbal inspiration as if it were equivalent to God's mechanically dictating words to the writers of Scripture, and simply ridicule such an idea. Surely, to the modern mind the term can easily be explained to mean that the Supreme Power who has inspired an author of a work has also inspired the work by which he expresses himself. We are all agreed that human thoughts and expression are inseparably connected. Why cannot we therefore understand that whatever affects one affects the other? If inspiration is a fact it necessarily touches the words as well as the ideas. Even those who accept the old traditional view of

God dictating words, and the human author writing them down, cannot exclude from their mind the influence upon the work of the personal peculiarities of the author. For example, it has rightly been pointed out that most stenographers writing letters for a business man have to correct his grammatical errors and make emandations here and there, and it is noticeable that many business men change their literary style when they change their stenographer. When we say, therefore, that the sacred writers of the Bible were inspired it does not follow that there is not a human element as well as a divine element in their writings. They were men having their own natural gifts, differing from one another in their previous education, and possessing a more or less extensive vocabulary. God did not by the gift of inspiration change their nature, but He consecrated it to His service so that the authors of the various books of the Bible have left an impress of their individual characters upon their writings. Amos—the shepherd prophet, called from the midst of his vocation as a herdsman—naturally used a rustic simplicity of style, very unlike the refined and elevated language of the royal prophet Isaiah.

Finally, let us note that the criterion of the truth of a revelation lies not in the particular circumstances with which its original communication was accompanied, but in the sustained appeal which it makes to the heart and reason and conscience of men, in the power which it possesses to answer the

obstinate questions of the soul and to inspire the peace which passes all understanding. It is because the messages transmitted to the world through the Bible have been submitted to this test and have been approved of in the result that we Jews claim the justification of regarding it to be of divine origin.

Two angels guide,
The path of man, both aged and yet young,
As angels are, ripening through endless years,
On one he leans: some call her Memory,
And some Tradition; and her voice is sweet,
With deep mysterious accord: the other,
Floating above, holds down a lamp which streams
A light divine and searching on the earth,
Compelling eyes and footsteps. Memory yields,
Yet clings with loving cheek, and shines anew,
Reflecting all the rays of that bright lamp
Our angel Reason holds. We had not walked
But for Tradition; we walk evermore
To higher paths by brightening Reason's lamp.

GEORGE ELIOT: *Spanish Gypsy.*

CHAPTER VII

JEWISH TRADITION—ITS NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE

In addition to the Bible which forms the basis of Jewish thought, Judaism consists of a huge superstructure, the teachings of tradition—Sabbath laws—The obscurities of the Bible led to the interchanges of views and the submission of new ideas—Work of Jochanan ben Zakkai—Judaism preserved itself for a considerable time upon an unwritten tradition—Amongst non-literary peoples the memory serves in place of the written word—It is not the written tradition which constitutes the life of a people but the unwritten tradition—Difference between traditional and documental evidence—Mishnah and Talmud—Jewish tradition was the great saving force of Judaism, for it was by means of tradition that the Torah was vitalized.

We have hitherto dealt with the Bible, its greatness and divine inspiration, but though we have found it to be a very fine expression of religion and morality, we must remember that it does not exhaust the whole of Judaism. A knowledge of Judaism cannot be obtained from the Bible alone. Whilst the Torah forms the basis of Jewish thought, an appreciation of the religious progress to which Judaism lays claim can be obtained only through the whole of its literature, which includes a knowledge of the history and development of post-biblical literature also. Judaism is not the religion of the

Patriarchs, Pentateuch, and the prophets only. It is ethical monotheism colored by the history of the Jewish people, and is a development ever continuing as that people or race or religious body survives from age to age, from clime to clime. We thus see that in addition to the Bible, which forms the basis of Jewish thought, Judaism consists of a huge superstructure—the teachings of tradition. Judaism is thus neither restricted to the Bible nor to the surroundings of Palestine. That environment marked only the point of its origin. As the real history of the Jew, as distinct from the Hebrew, may be said to have begun with the Roman capture of Jerusalem, when he exchanged a strip of soil for the universe, so his religion, which is not Mosaism or Rabbinism but Judaism, attained its greatest breadth when the sacrificial culte disappeared, prayer became the substitution for burnt offerings, and schools and synagogues spread in every land. Ideals change, customs vary, opinions clash, and out of this everlasting conflict Judaism obtains new life and vigor. This is one secret of its survival.

Sinai was thus not the only source from which revelation came to Israel. The God of the Pentateuch and of the prophets revealed himself also to the Rabbinic teachers of Judaism, and there was a continuous process of evolution and development connecting the Bible with later traditions.

Judaism, being a "way of life" rather than a system of theology, consists of rites, observances, and

ceremonials as well as ethical practices and religious beliefs. If, as a "way of life," it was to function effectively, it must have had an oral law to explain and interpret the Bible and to clarify scriptural enactments and render their observance practicable. For example, the command not to kindle a fire in our habitation on the Sabbath day if carried out literally would have made the seventh day, during the cold winter months, a day of sadness and misery. Again, the command that "No man shall go forth from his place on the Sabbath day," could certainly never have been intended to be taken literally. How were these passages to be explained so that the true spirit of the Sabbath day be observed without any transgression of the biblical commands concerning it? Surely, side by side with the Mosaic code there must have been an oral tradition as to the true interpretations of the difficult passages in the Bible and of the usages and customs connected with them. Again, we are told that the man found gathering sticks on the Sabbath day was brought to Moses and put to death for breaking one of the Sabbath laws. The people must have known that this act constituted a labor prohibited on the Sabbath day even though there is no distinct statement concerning it in the written Sabbath laws, otherwise the Sabbath breaker would have committed the sin in ignorance. It is also of interest to note that from the account given in the Book of Haggai (ii. 11) it would appear that there were

many details concerning the laws of cleanness and uncleanness which were known to the priests and prophets to a greater extent than explained in the written law. Furthermore, as time went on, numerous new regulations and practices, based on the commands of the Pentateuch, came into force, and these, together with the explanations, commentaries, and detailed accounts of the written commands of the Bible, formed the contents of the oral law.

We thus see that side by side with the Bible there has been from the very earliest time a form of its interpretation and exegesis which has been known as the oral law as distinguished from the Bible itself —the written law. In fact, even in the Bible itself traces of various interpretations of the Pentateuchal code and institutions can be seen. For example, when Jeremiah says that God did not command Israel concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices from the time that He had brought them out of Egypt, he was merely explaining that the laws in Leviticus with reference to sacrifices were given to Israel as a concession to popular custom, but not with the express desire of making Israel regard them as the truest form of worship.

But difficult points were always arising in their attempts to adhere to the true spirit and letter of the Torah and modifications in the law were constantly being introduced by the Rabbis. For example, during the Maccabean war the rigid observance of the Sabbath was an impossibility, and it was

decided, therefore, that it was permissible to defend one's own life even on the Sabbath.

Questions of this nature must have presented themselves to the observant at the execution of every law, seeing that in the Bible the details are rarely added, whilst the necessity of their being strictly carried out in all particulars is emphatically enjoined. Some of these details might be ascertained from tradition; and tradition, therefore, had to be collected and sifted. Other details could be learned by carefully analyzing the biblical passages which treated of the institution, whilst in cases where no aid could be obtained from these sources recourse was had to analogies, conjectures, and other methods resulting from rules which were laid down for the interpretation of unexplained proscriptions. This necessitated the formation of the order of scribes which, properly speaking, commenced with Ezra (vii. 6), who was surnamed the "Scribe." Their zeal, ingenuity, and learning was devoted to the work of arranging and systematizing these records which, after having received in the course of ages many accretions, became known as the traditional or oral law.

The obscurities and difficulties of the Bible had led to interchanges of views and the submission of new ideas. These explanations naturally varied according to times and circumstances and they were passed on orally from age to age, thus accumulating into a mass of tradition which had its roots in

the dim past, and, having grown by the side of the Bible as the living system of its application in everyday life, obtained the same sanctity as the Bible itself. "The oral law was as binding as the written law, for they were both the words of the Living God." In the oral law the laws of the Bible are thus explained and adapted to later circumstances so that they can be workable in every sense of the term. Once a decision was reached it was as binding as the original command in the Bible from which it arose; whilst a "fence" was even put around the law so as to prevent its being broken.

Critical scholars of the type of Zunz have shown in a scientific way how the oral law and Jewish tradition may be traced right from the biblical period, how the voice of God never ceased to deliver its message to Israel at all times, and how Israel received its instructions through all ages by means of inspired prophets, scribes, sages, and scholars, each of whom by their respective methods of interpretation and exegesis contributed toward the one long chain of never-ending Jewish tradition and Hebraic thought.

The destruction of the Temple and the conversion of Judaism from a commonwealth into a synagogue caused the Rabbis to feel that a new era in Jewish history was commencing, and they regarded it their duty, therefore, to collect together the old traditional laws so that they would now assume some definite form. During the Babylonian Exile

many biblical laws connected with the Temple worship could not be observed and were gradually becoming obsolete, whilst many other laws, particularly those which related specifically to Jewish life in Palestine, such as those dealing with agriculture, were no longer in use, and there was the danger of their being lost. The Rabbis felt that once these laws had been codified there would be no fear whatever of their being lost entirely. With the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem in 70 C.E., Jochanan ben Zakkai became leader of the Jewish people. Though he loved Zion and wept bitterly over its destruction, he realized the immediate need for the creation of a new Jewish center of learning. Jochanan was a remarkable man in many ways. Although a teacher of considerable distinction and originality, he was a most modest man. But his outstanding greatness lay in his realizing at the time that charity and love of man could replace the sacrifices.

A new period of Hebrew literature now commenced. The religious traditions and historical writings of the past were all carefully sifted and examined and numerous additions were made. But the literature of the Rabbis was not yet written down as had been done with the Bible, but was committed to memory and handed down orally from teacher to pupil. The Jewish council was transferred to Jamnia and this city thus became the center of Jewish scholarship, retaining that position

until 135 C.E. The Rabbis may have lectured to their students in a vineyard, just as the Greek philosophers delivered their discourses in the gardens of the "academy" at Athens, or the term "vineyard" may have been used only in a metaphorical sense in order to describe the pleasant intellectual gatherings which took place there. In any case, the "vineyard of Jamnia" became the home of Rabbinic learning and scholarship. The literary activity connected with this period marked the commencement of the preservation of the oral tradition, which was from time to time gradually developed and expounded, adapted and modified, till it assumed a written form in the "Mishnah."

We thus see how Judaism was able to preserve itself for a considerable time upon an unwritten tradition, and it is only natural therefore that many of the early Rabbis of the Talmudic period, who lived much nearer to biblical times than we do, should have known more of the early history of the Hebrews and should have had a much finer feeling for and better understanding of their psychology than we today.

The fact that these traditions were preserved orally from generation to generation should cause us no astonishment. We all know how amongst non-literary peoples the memory serves in place of the written word. In India today there are rude tribes in a somewhat primitive stage of civilization who will commit to memory every jot and tittle of

a long, complicated treaty between themselves and a civilized government. And, curiously enough, one can point to tribes amongst whom such details have been handed down with the utmost accuracy from one generation to another. True as this is of primitive illiterate peoples, it is equally true of literary races who have reached quite an advanced stage of culture.

We will now proceed to consider what is actually meant by the term "tradition." Literally, of course, tradition is a handing over of a thing from one to another. The word is also used for the things that are passed on. We refer to the traditions of a nation, a society, a university, or a school. And now we can begin to realize the basic meaning of a national tradition. Let us take, as an instance, the national traditions of the American people. Among these traditions there is a considerable amount that has been formulated or preserved in writing such as "Acts of Congress," "Legal Precedences," "Literary Contributions," etc. These are, of course, of the utmost importance in describing to us what true Americanism stands for. Yet vastly important as these may be they are certainly not the essentials. It is not the *written* tradition which constitutes the life of a people but the *unwritten* tradition. If the written accounts of all these traditions to which we have referred were suddenly to disappear, the American people would still exist intact. Similarly, it is not formulæ or written

accounts which, as Jews, have made us what we are, but those characteristics of body and mind, those virtues and emotions, those habits of thinking and of feeling, which have passed from generation to generation.

We maintain primitive tradition because it possesses the claims to veneration and respect which we assign to it and because Jews have always referred to it as to a true and real authority respecting Jewish observance and practice. This argument, it will be observed, is quite independent of all the practicable value of tradition.

Though absolute and real authority is claimed only for a few great affirmative principles of doctrine—the great landmarks of Jewish teachings in all times—yet, besides these, there are doctrines and usages and expositions of Scripture claiming reverence and respect in proportion to the various degrees in which the voice of the Jewish people has been pronounced respecting them. Many of these are of extreme antiquity and prevalence; they pervade our belief and practice to such extent as to give them the whole of their peculiar color; they furnish the rules and principles of Scripture interpretation much further than we can conceive; they blend and mingle so intimately with our very faculties of Jewish understanding that we cannot, if we would, regard Judaism without them. They alone satisfy the daily details of thoughts, doubts, duties, dangers, and conduct. And this sort of tra-

dition, witnessed and in great measure embodied in the writings of past ages, is the peculiar possession of catholic Israel. With its aid Judaism instructs us daily in her doctrines and teachings. With its aid she meets every new emergent case of difficulty in which her decision is desired and her authority deferred to. With it she teaches what she proves from the Bible.

For a long time tradition was regarded by scientific investigators as the Cinderella of history. Like the ugly sisters, historians behaved toward it haughtily and with condescension, and it was kept severely in the background. This treatment was based on the apparently sound arguments that, in order to deserve attention, tradition must be proved to be true; that, since oral testimony is the foundation of traditions, they cannot readily be proved to be true; and that there, for all sensible people, was an end of the matter.

Now, in order to understand the real importance of traditions, we must bear in mind that their true value lies in the fact that they preserve the thought of our forefathers even though what they thought may be considered by many as incorrect. It has rightly been said that, "We may find men wrong in what they thought they were, but we cannot find them wrong in what they thought they thought." It may not be true that King Alfred burnt the cakes, but it is true that his subjects thought it happened. A document may be discovered any day

by some scholar which will prove that Alfred was never defeated by the Danes, but it would be useless to expect us to believe that he was a bad king hated by his subjects. The chorus of the voices of our forefathers speaking with undiminished vigor through the gramophone we call tradition will be raised to give the lie to the hypothesis, for documents may come and documents may go but tradition goes on forever.

One of the credentials of traditions is the integrity of their origin. Whilst rumors usually originate with some set purpose and then, after being a nine days' wonder, die down for want of the credence of honest men, traditions are of innocent and subconscious extraction and their growth is gradual and steady, gathering volume with time. They are based on honest conviction, and men repeat them not because they have an axe to grind, but almost inevitably and casually round the domestic hearth. King Alfred's cakes may not have been burnt, but the whole story and similar incidents about him reveal to us the simplicity and generosity of the king. And so, in this naïve and natural manner, we gain an insight into the ideas of our fathers and we learn what they thought—not what some historical personage wants us to think they thought.

The difference between traditional and documentary evidence may be best summarized by saying that, whilst the former represents the majority report, the latter is the report of the minority. It

is not surprising, therefore, that they so often contradict each other.

In dealing with historical documents we must bear in mind that on the strength of them we cannot pronounce a formal verdict on any subject unless we have first had access to every document dealing with that subject; and, furthermore, we cannot possibly tell when we have reached the limit of documentary evidence. Few of us have access to a large number of historical documents. We are obliged, therefore, to accept their authenticity on second-hand information. It behooves us, therefore, before accepting the authority of the historian, to find out what manner of man he is and to submit him to two invariable tests—in order to be sure that he is worthy of our attention. He must in the first place be honest, and in the second place well informed. Even then we must be on our guard, for the most fair-minded historian may be occasionally subject to prejudices which blind him.

Even those anthropologists who deny to oral tradition of primitive tribes their face value cannot deny to them all value whatsoever. It is clear that even the wildest and manifestly most impossible tales may be of the utmost importance as revelations of the cultural status of the people who cherish them whether as annals of incidents that once occurred or as purely products of the imagination. We know, of course, from ethnological literature,

as well as from a study of our civilization, the force of the human tendency to mingle fancy with fact, to introduce rationalistic afterthoughts, and to ignore the essential and apotheosize the trivial. In fact, our own historical perspective is only a slowly and painfully acquired product of recent years.

E. A. Freeman, in his *Methods of Historical Study,* has summarized this point of view very well. He says:

> The kernel of all sound teaching in historical matters is the doctrine that no historical study is of any value which does not take in a knowledge of original authorities. Let no one mistake this saying, as if I were laying down a rule that no knowledge of any historical matter can be of any value which does not come straight from an original authority.
>
> The fact is that Livy, Plutarch, and a crowd of others, though they are not original authorities in themselves, are original authorities to us. That is to say, we can for the most part get no further than what they tell us. We know that they copied earlier writers; we often know what earlier writers they copied. But those earlier writers are for the most part lost; to us Livy and Plutarch are their representatives. For a large part of their story we have no appeal from them except either to internal evidence or to any fragmentary authorities of other kinds that may be left to us. There is no counter-narrative.

If, then, we are to define original authorities, we might perhaps define them as those writers from whom we have no appeal, except to other writers of the same class.

We must remember that even the best contemporary writer is commonly a primary authority for a part only of his subject. Though living at the time of which he writes, though often an actor in the scenes of which he writes, still he cannot always write from personal knowledge; he cannot have seen everything with his own eyes; he must constantly write only what he has been told by others, only he is able to judge of what is told him by others in a way that a later writer cannot do. And besides his narrative, there is often other contemporary evidence which for some purposes may be of higher authority than his narrative. The text of a proclamation or a treaty is, within its own range, of higher authority than the very best contemporary narrative. I say within its own range, because the official document, while it always proves a great deal, does not always prove everything.

The later writers are by no means to be cast aside; it is often very important to see how they looked at the events of earlier times. The point to be understood is that they are not authorities, that they are not witnesses, that a statement made by a contemporary gains nothing in inherent value because it is copied over and over again by a hundred writers who are not contemporaries. Whenever a man at any date

> has special means of knowledge, he becomes so far an authority; a local writer or a man who has specially studied some particular class of subjects may be in this sense an authority, that is the nearest approach to an authority that we can get, even for times long before his own.

We have noted how the *sopherim,* or scribes, became editors of the Sacred Text, the expositors of the Holy Writ and the regular teachers of the Jews. We moderns cannot form any adequate conception of the love which the ancient scribes had for the Bible, and we read in Rabbinic literature how scholars were able to write it entirely from memory and then instruct others in it quite gratuitously. Let us now proceed to consider how the work of the scribes developed. Once the thirst for knowledge had been aroused it could not easily be quenched, and we hear of a multiplicity of sects in Israel—the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes—all with different theories of the universe, different systems for the salvation of the soul, and different interpretations of the law.

The Pharisees, who were the successors of the scribes, were the group formed from the great mass of the people and were, therefore, representatives of the people as a whole. They were the adherents of the traditional interpretations of the law. The Sadducees, who appeared as the opponents of the Pharisees, professed more liberal and philosophic tenets, and were drawn chiefly from the wealthier

section of Israel and those who enjoyed a liberal education; whilst the Essenes, and other sects of a similar type, had but a small following.

A great difference between the Pharisees and Sadducees was based on the acceptance or rejection of those laws, interpretations, and commentaries which were not written but delivered by tradition from generation to generation. Circumstances necessitated a reinterpretation of many biblical commands, especially in their application to the daily life of the Jewish people. Furthermore, new laws and customs had arisen since the closing of the Canon, which together with their interpretations had been transmitted orally from generation to generation. The great Hillel, who was president of the Sanhedrin in the time of Herod, was the first to attempt to introduce some order into this chaotic mass of tradition by arranging it into six principle divisions. This work was resumed later by R. Akiba and R. Meir. But it was not until the time of R. Jehuda Hanasi, who flourished about the end of the second century, that a digest of the oral law was made which received general acceptance. With the works of Rabbi Akiba and R. Meir, as his basis, R. Jehuda Hanasi sifted the whole material of the oral law and added to it the decisions of his own academy concerning various doubtful points. He recorded the opinions which had been agreed upon by all quite anonymously, but where there was a divergence of view the name of the author was also mentioned.

Originally this work was designated the Mishnah of R. Jehuda, to distinguish it from that of R. Akiba and R. Meir, but as it was generally accepted as the authorized code of traditional Jewish law, it is known simply as the Mishnah par excellence.

Whilst the Bible thus contains the written law of the Hebrews, the Mishnah contains the oral laws which have been handed down by tradition. The word "Mishnah" is connected with a Hebrew root which means "to repeat," and then "to learn" or "to teach"; and the word thus came to mean "teaching" of the oral tradition. The language of the Mishnah is a remarkable example of the flexibility of Hebrew and its ability to adapt itself to varying conditions of life. It is a logical development of the language of the Bible adapted to a newer form of civilization and suited to the needs of a later time. It is usually designated as "Neo-Hebraic" to distinguish it from the Hebrew in which the Bible is written. Although the Mishnah contains here and there some interesting exegetical passages, it is mainly legalistic in character and its discussions and laws deal with every aspect of life—religion, commerce, social duties, etc.

Later the laws of the Mishnah were discussed, commented upon, and explained at the Jewish academies of Palestine and Babylon, and the authentic records of these discussions are called "Gemara." The laws, interpretations and constructions of these

laws, dissertations, expositions, comments, explanations, and glosses were now collected with the Mishnah and embodied in one volume known as the "Talmud." There are two Talmudim. One compiled in Palestine about 400 C.E. and containing the learning of the Palestinian schools is popularly known as the "Jerusalem Talmud"; the other compiled in Babylon about 500 C.E. is known as the "Babylonian Talmud."

The Rabbis regarded the life of man, from the cradle to the grave, as a religious service wholly devoted to God. This explains why so large a section of the Talmud deals with religious laws, for these embrace almost every action in life. The fixing of dates of fasts and feasts, the arrangement of prayers and sacrifices, and the symbolical details connected with rites and ceremonies are all the subjects of discussion and consideration.

We read also of laws relating to tithes, laws concerning jubilee, and hygienic laws for both sexes. All these are considered with profound care and deep thought, showing the importance which early Jewish thinkers attached to every aspect of life. In the course of their determining of various religious questions, the Rabbis referred to their knowledge of mathematics and natural science. They had recourse to botany in treating of seeds and to zoölogy in speaking of unclean animals. They needed astronomy in preparing the calendar, physi-

ology and medicine in treating of various hygienic laws, and mechanics and art in describing the temple and its architecture.

We thus see, from our brief sketch of the Talmud, that it is a vast storehouse of Rabbinical reflections and discussions on thousands of topics treated of and touched on in the Bible, a compendium of Jewish lore, scientific and legendry, and a vast treasury of Jewish speculation and faith. It rightfully occupies one of the most distinguished places amongst the monuments of the past, and there are few works of such elaborate character, discerning minuteness, and extended scope inherited from such a remote age to be compared with it. To the Jew, the Talmud has been throughout the ages his greatest molding force; his thoughts and activities have been continuously influenced by its teachings. It has been to him an encircling ocean, encompassing his whole being and penetrating every action of his daily life.

Our outline of the development of Jewish tradition has shown us the democratic nature on which it is based. We have seen that many traditional laws originated with the people rather than with the legislators. These laws were the expressions of the demands of the people and it was merely the function of the Rabbis to formulate and limit these popular demands. The laws became binding only because the people wished them to be so, and the Rabbis, in their recognition of the strength of the

public opinion, always advised their pupils to follow the prevailing custom if in doubt concerning the observance of a certain law. But this was only possible through the place which the Torah came to occupy in the life of the Jew, for as a result of the development in Jewish thought and tradition the Torah had come to occupy a supreme place of importance in every possible aspect of Jewish life.

The Bible had come to be known as the constitution of the Jewish people, a constitution which could be reinterpreted, but to which no essential could be added and from which no important subtraction could be made. But whilst the Bible formed the basic constitution of Judaism, tradition formed the commentary on this. Judaism could never have maintained itself on a literal fulfillment of the Bible, for its growth would have become stunted and its development arrested. Jewish tradition was thus the great saving force of Judaism, for it was by means of tradition that the Torah was vitalized and adapted to the ever-changing conditions of life. We can thus understand how, after a time, traditional customs and observances came to be regarded equally as binding as those of the Bible, and hardly any line of distinction was drawn between those originating from one source and those from another. Torah now came to mean not only the five books of the Pentateuch but the work of any great teacher who had contributed to the upbuilding of Judaism. In the words of Schechter: "The conviction was

firmly held that everything wise and good, be it ethical or ceremonial in its character, whose effect would be to strengthen the cause of religion, was at least potentially contained in the Torah and that it only required an earnest religious mind to find it there. Hence the famous adage that everything which any student will teach at any future time was already communicated to Moses at Mount Sinai; or the injunction that any acceptable truth, even if discovered by an insignificant man in Israel, should be considered as having the authority of a great sage or prophet, or even of Moses himself. The principle was that the words of the Torah are fruitful and multiply."

But Jewish law was neither settled finally by the Mishnah nor the Gemara. As difficulties arose in each generation the Rabbis were consulted and it was they who gave a final decision. After a time, various attempts were made to codify the great mass of Jewish traditional law. Amongst these one may particularly refer to the Mishnah Torah (Second Law) by Maimonides, the Turim by Jacob Ben Asher, and the Shulchan Aruch by R. Joseph Caro.

Tradition is the extension of the franchise. Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead. Tradition refuses to submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking about. All Democrats object to men being disqualified by the accident of birth; tradition objects to their being disqualified by the accident of death. Democracy tells us not to neglect a good man's opinion even if he is our groom; tradition asks us not to neglect a good man's opinion even if he is our father.

FOSDICK: *Meaning of Faith.*

CHAPTER VIII

THE AUTHORITY OF JEWISH TRADITION

Authority and experiment—As most people advance they seem ever ready to learn, to benefit from the knowledge of others, to submit themselves to authority—There is a strong rational element in the acceptance of tradition—The most extreme traditionalism and the most extreme modernism are accepted upon authority in the same way—Jews have no external authority to which they can turn as a universally recognized synod—No form of Jewish life can be said to be traditional unless it is fully in harmony with Jewish practice—The traditions of old are the very spiritual forces by which our ancestors lived—Judaism is a living system of life and cannot be expressed in any rigid formula—Traditional Judaism is not a dead organism but a living force constantly developing and adapting itself to the needs of the age though always maintaining a complete unity with Jewish life and thought—Theories postulated as to the origin of an institution do not affect its importance from a specifically Jewish standpoint. —Judaism to many but a godless nationalism.

It is usually thought that authority and experiment ought to be separated and treated as matters entirely apart—the former as part of the life of religion, the latter as characteristic of science. We are told that in the domains of religion the law is laid down for us; in the case of Judaism, for example, it comes from the Bible and the teachings of great Rabbis, who, we believe, are able to decide questions for us. Religion is thus said to be character-

ized by authority. A person must either accept the instruction he receives or leave it. On the other hand, science, we are told, is characterized by free experiment in which each man makes his own advance untrammeled by tradition, unrestricted by any authority. Is this really true? One is reminded of the story of the lady who said to Huxley, "Be very careful what you say, for I shall believe every word of it, whatever it is." The same lady was probably heard saying, a few days later, "Of course you religious people go by authority; you believe what you are told, but in science we have no authority. We only believe what we prove." This is one of the popular contrasts between science and religion.

There is no doubt that in some respects religion is a deference, a humility, a receiving of a great message which has come long ago from far aloft. It has a communicated word, an entrusted ministry which consists of authorized persons to expound it who, in teaching, rely upon a body of tradition regarded as unchangeable. But does not the authorized scientific teacher follow this method also? What would happen to a person who proposed to make advances in science or even to acquire the elements of a particular science, or of scientific method in general, but was not prepared to submit himself to authority—to the authority that can teach? Would he ever make any progress in his work? Surely not. We cannot possibly make any real advance without authority, although some

people may make some kind of advance with a minimum of authority.

Let us take the following as a typical instance. In every village there is a man who has a wonderful trick of playing the piano or the organ. He does not care for the classics. He has never learned to read great music and has never submitted himself to the discipline of the great masters. He simply improvises for himself as he goes on. We find him charming at the age of ten, charming at twenty-one, and continuing like this, for the rest of his life. There is no originality, no development, no growth. The condition of growth is to have learned the old things; the condition of advance is to have been subject to the great masters—to have submitted one's self to the treasured achievements of the earliest searchers, to make use of the stored treasure gained through the ages. In all science training is the absolutely indispensable prerequisite for genuine originality.

Suppose a person who is desirous of obtaining a knowledge of chemistry were to stand near the door of one of the lecture rooms of a university where the subject is being taught, and say, "I wish to obtain a knowledge of chemistry. I wish to obtain information as to the chemical processes which take place when certain elements are compounded but I shall not enter this lecture room until I am convinced of a variety of things concerning which I am doubtful. Who is this person whom you describe

as the professor of chemistry? I don't believe in his credentials. He has certainly never shown me that he knows anything about it. I shall wait here until he comes out and convinces me that he really knows his work, is successful in his methods, and that his methods are the most up to date." The person who takes an attitude such as this could never succeed. He would continue waiting outside the lecture room till mosses would clothe his limbs and he would then be no wiser than before. If he is to gain any knowledge whatever, he must make up his mind at the outset that he is going to submit himself to authority. He has to believe that the man who is described as the professor of the subject is the hero of a hundred fights of investigation and that what he does not know for the present on the subject is not worth knowing. He has to believe that, if he comes into the classroom, some knowledge will eventually get into his astonishingly thick skull. In other words, his first actions must be submissions to authority.

But now when he enters the classroom does he immediately commence investigating some of the inner secrets of chemical life? No. He is taught to handle some common scientific instruments, and even there he needs authority to guide him. While a man knows little, there is little he has to be taught. A few simple words of guidance will show him how to handle one or two of the most common instruments in the chemical laboratory.

And so, in every branch of knowledge, there is little room for teaching when nothing is known, and that is why it is so difficult to teach those who know little. But let us go to the other end of the scale. Let us imagine ourselves at a gathering of distinguished scientists, every one of whom may be a man of international repute in his own particular field. What kind of atmosphere usually exists at such a gathering? Here we find every man asking questions of his neighbor, every man gladly submitting to the authority of the stored knowledge of the next. It is the men who know little who are slow to submit to authority and teaching. The man of knowledge feels that his curiosity increases as his accomplishments grow. He always feels above him a sky of knowledge which has not yet been scaled but whose light he can receive. Here and there one may meet a person who grows into the condition where he regards himself as unteachable and wishes others to listen whilst he speaks. But that person will never advance. As most people advance they seem ever ready to learn, to benefit from the knowledge of others—to submit themselves to authority.

We must realize that authority and reason are by no means opposed to each other. Authority is not a rival and opponent of reason, as many philosophers, including Balfour, argue. In fact it is from authority that reason itself draws its most important premises. Nothing can do greater harm to the

cause of truth than a mere lip service to logical science after having previously determined fully the conclusion at which we desire to arrive. Even in the acceptance of authority or, for that matter, in the acceptance of tradition there is a distinctly rational element.

We are all agreed that human reason is only partial and imperfect. One has only to recall the grotesque fancies that, from time to time, have taken hold of the finest and brainiest men and led them into the grossest illusions to satisfy himself that the seat of authority does not lie in the reason. Not that we are to throw away reason in matters of religion, for while faith is oft times above reason, it is by no means contrary to it. The voice of reason in religion, however, is not to be always considered final and authoritative. Dr. F. J. Hall says: "It is because authority is valid prior to our reasoning that it is discovered to be credible by reason; and it is this prior validity that reason discovers, thus establishing the rationality of our dependence upon authority. Authority presents truth to the mind and does so, none the less really whether it is rightly understood or not."

It is true that there are some things which one may discover for himself and others which he must accept because he has neither the opportunity nor the leisure to test them for himself. But the acceptance of the latter is not always mere credulity. Seeing that I have never had the opportunity of study-

ing higher mathematics or physics I am prepared to accept all that Einstein teaches concerning the subject, because he is generally regarded as the greatest living authority on this branch of knowledge. But my acceptance of this on authority is really an intellectual process, because I have only agreed to accept this after inquiring into the attitude of other mathematicians, who are authorities on the subject, concerning the work of Einstein.

Similarly, in the acceptance of tradition there is a strong rational element. My acceptance of Jewish tradition and Jewish culture means that my studies have led me to attach much greater importance to this learning and wisdom of the Jewish mind with reference to some of the great problems of life and religion than I could ever hope to arrive at as a result of my own experience and investigations. And so, realizing the practical utility of these collected investigations of my ancestors, I submit to their authority as shown in their traditions. I feel that it is by no means unreasonable for me to submit to this authority, for my studies of Jewish history and the development of Jewish thought have led me to realize that there is a supernatural force molding the destinies of the Jewish people, shaping and forming their lives and characters. And, as the practices which have arisen amongst them are the product of the minds of teachers whose work shows them to have been divinely inspired, they are based upon an unquestionably intelligent authority,

a divine authority, and to this I, as a Jew, am prepared to submit.

We often hear it said that, for a true development of the inner life, one must not be subject to any outward restraint. We must strike out along our own lines and be true to our own selves. And, inasmuch as we ourselves, are the active party in all things, we are not to be determined by arbitrary directions.

Now, in the first place, we must realize that, however much the personal element is centered in every individual, yet each man realizes his personality among men as a social being. There is an essentially social setting of the individual life, and the ethical and religious contents of man's life have been developed and have taken form in social relations. Even Spencer admits the organic relation and natural interplay between the individual and the milieu in the midst of which he has grown up. The individual finds a standard for comparison and material to assimilate as expressed in the personal experiences and judgments around him, and he is influenced largely by these principles as he strives to realize his own religious and ethical ideals.

We thus see that, for the vast majority, everywhere and always, the most extreme traditionalism and the most extreme modernism are accepted upon authority in exactly the same way, although the average layman, who has neither the competence nor the time to investigate any of his religious prin-

ciples at first hand, necessarily accepts at second hand such views as he may hold about it on the authority of any teacher whose competence he may respect and in whose ability and honesty he may have confidence. A difficult situation has recently arisen in Judaism owing to the fact that religious authority has, at times, been misused, and the result has been to cause teachers of traditional Judaism to be discredited by many. There is a feeling on the part of many that, in the name of traditional Judaism, much error has been taught, and this form of Judaism is widely discarded. Curiously, however, with this negative attitude toward the Judaism which claims the authority of the past there is combined an astonishing readiness to accept, with the most naïve credulity, the doctrines of new teachers, however poorly accredited, provided only that they stand definitely apart from such tradition as has hitherto prevailed. If Judaism is to proclaim her message in the modern world, not merely to the docile children of orthodoxy but to the multitudes, she needs to recover both the capacity and also the moral right to speak with authority, in the name of the living God, the authentic message of spiritual truth.

We Jews possess in the tenets and accepted beliefs of Judaism a much richer faith than the average Jew could find for himself. Jewish tradition and Jewish practice present a much more complete scheme of things than individually anyone can call his own.

The thinking Jew, unwilling to accept the authority of tradition, is really confronted with the problem of balancing the claims of two rival authorities—his own individual experiences and feelings over against those of generations of others who have preceded him. Is it not wiser for him to regard the authority claimed by Jewish tradition as a mold into which he can pour the treasures of his own religious experience than to reject it entirely?

In religion, as in every other sphere of human life, the individual is molded by the social tradition which he inherits, and that authority is the inevitable form under which education and social training invariably begin. If the individual is to enter into any spiritual inheritance of value, he must begin by sitting at the feet of tradition. The Jewish layman must realize that Judaism cannot be picked up or discovered without guidance. Judaism is a definite, positive, historical religion which requires to be taught in theory and practice. Authority is the necessary form under which any tradition, whether of religion or of civilization, must be mediated in the first instance to individuals if it is to reach them at all. To attempt to cut off Judaism from its old historical tradition is simply to cut it off as a historical religion from its very being.

Our very attempts to rationalize any religion of worth means turning it into something else other than itself, for there is more in religion than can adequately be grasped by the mind, and this can

only be expressed in the language of metaphor and symbol. We must realize that every religion, and, for that matter, every philosophy, must contain an element of permanent inadequacy, and that neither Judaism nor any other religion of worth will be fully understood if approached in the spirit of a Salomon Reinach.

True religion can never be entirely rational but must inevitably be bound with a touch of poetry and mysticism. The truly devout Jew realizes, personally, the feelings of the psalmist, when he exclaimed such passages as, "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" "And there is not upon earth that I desire beside thee"; or, "As the heart panteth after the water-brooks so panteth my soul after thee, God!"

The emotional and mystical elements associated with historical Judaism have prevented its being influenced by the arid and meager defects of Deism or Pantheism. The tribulations and persecutions of Israel brought God nearer to His people and created a close and mystic affinity between God and the people of God. This affinity meant not only that God selected Israel for a peculiar mission, but His spirit was immanent in their midst and He loved them with a peculiar love. The mystic relation which existed between God and ancient Israel must be replaced by the mystic relation between God and every individual Jewish soul. The means by which the medieval Kabbalists or modern Chasidim raised their souls from mundane things to spiritual com-

munion may not appeal to us, but some of them, at least, have a lesson for the Western Jew of today.

The Jewish scholar who aims at achieving an intellectual interpretation of Judaism as a whole must take account of the whole, and not merely of a part, of the tradition of Judaism in its historical development from its very earliest days until now. It may be said, "You cannot have it both ways. Tradition must be either right or wrong, valuable or worthless. Is tradition entitled to carry any weight or have any value at all?" The traditionalist starts with a bias in favor of tradition, just as the self-conscious modernist starts with a bias against it. The conservative or orthodox Jew, who observes traditional Jewish ceremonials, is on the whole traditionally minded, just as the Jew who holds himself aloof from historical Judaism is anti-traditional. The scientific value of either of these attitudes can be realized by our bearing in mind that tradition must be constantly sifted, criticized, and re-interpreted in relation to our knowledge of the world as a whole. The Jewish theologian, starting out as a Jew with a bias in favor of Judaism, and anxious to test the spiritual value of Jewish tradition in the world of today, refuses to believe that the faith by which his ancestors have lived for generations can be nothing more than an illusion. He realizes that the intellectual and rational interpretations of many Jewish traditions need to be restated and reinterpreted in every age, but this does not

necessarily mean that tradition can be defied entirely. We must realize that Judaism as a religion must always base its appeal on the heart and conscience of man, rather than on his intellect, and its appeal must always be psychological rather than logical.

Scott Holland says, in his work *Logic and Life*, "Faith is not made by argument. It seeks indeed for a rational solution of life's mysteries; it grows through gaining hold of them! The depth said, 'It is not in me.' Not from things without, but from the heart within, cometh wisdom; there, in the inner places of the soul, in the secret will, with which a man fears the Lord and departs from evil, is the true place of spiritual understanding."

We Jews need an authority which is in its nature emancipatory and not repressive, empowering and not enfeebling. The object of Jewish faith must be the source of Jewish freedom. Judaism can only be saved by what saves the soul.

The modern Jew can commit no greater error than to set himself against the codes of tried experience of past ages. The doctrines of the past are not only men's formulations but the accumulated verdicts of the moral and religious experiences of vast ranges. To attempt to emancipate oneself from the restraint of such codes is, therefore, the very height of rashness and folly. A much wiser method for us to employ is to make fair trial of them by personal interpretation with the conviction that these codes

will be understood better as they are lived. If they contain the revelation of divine truth of modern origin, then the incapacity to perceive and receive the doctrine means simply that the age is lacking in moral fiber.

Balfour rightly says, "It is authority rather than reason to which, in the main, we owe, not religion only, but ethics and politics." He ridicules the idea of a community of which the members should set out to examine deliberately the grounds on which their moral, religious, and civil life rests. But this is what people who refuse the instruction of legal and religious codes practically propose. As we have already noted, even in the domain of exact science it is impossible for the student to obtain his information entirely from his own experience, excluding entirely the experience of others. Those who refuse to assent to any other authority than that which is absolutely final usually fall in with fallible authorities without admitting it.

Professor Andrew Seth, in dealing with the nature of truth, has said:

> The truth is hardly likely to be the final truth; it may be taken up and superseded in a wider and fuller truth. And, in this way, we might pass, in successive cycles of finite existence, from sphere to sphere of experience, from orb to orb of truth, and even the highest would still remain a finite truth and fall infinitely short of the truth of God. But such a doctrine

> of relativity in no way invalidates the truth of revelation at any given stage. The fact that the truth that I reach is the truth for me does not make it, on that account, less true. It is true so far as it goes, and if my experience can carry me no further, I am justified in treating it as ultimate until it is superseded. Should it ever be superseded, I shall then see both how it is modified by being comprehended in a higher truth, and also how it, and no other statement of the truth, could have been true at my former standpoint. But, before that higher standpoint is reached, to seek to discredit our present insight by the general reflection that its truth is partial and requires correction, is a perfectly empty truth, which, in its bearing upon human life, must also certainly have the effect of an untruth.

Now there are two features by which true authority can be distinguished. In the first place, real authority concerning any branch of knowledge is based upon achievement in that field; and, secondly, this authority promotes investigation and proof. Let us proceed to develop each of these points more fully. If I am engaged in the study of history, it is useless to ask me to believe that Lincoln lived in the fifteenth century because the president of the Mexican Soap Corporation says so. The president of the Mexican Soap Corporation may be a great authority on the manufacture of soap, but that does not prove he has a knowledge of history. That great authority

which belongs to a particular sphere of action must not be applied to a sphere which is foreign to his field of achievement.

There have been times when people were ready to submit their convictions to the decrees of kings, just as there have been times when people were willing to submit their religious actions to the exigencies of party politics. There have been times when people were willing to deny what they knew scientifically to be true because an authority based on achievement in quite another field refused to accept the conclusions. We thus see that real authority is based upon achievement in the field where it proposes to exercise itself. I cannot accept the dictates of my mother-in-law in the choice of an automobile if all her life she has been engaged in the study of domestic economy. It is necessary for us to realize this at the outset, because a great deal of the prejudice against authority, particularly in the field of religion, has been due to the fact that people have called by the name of authority an authority which was not valid because it belonged to a different field of knowledge or of action. A man may be a great authority in handling test-tubes or in counting up inches and millimeters, but that does not prove that he has the slightest idea as to how to consider the nature and interest of conscience.

Secondly, true authority promotes investigation in every possible way. When a religion is supposed to be sacred in such a way that one must not inquire

as to how it was made or what it means, or concerning the functions of its ceremonials, but must take it or leave it, then that religion somehow bears the mark of imposture. Beware of it!

In other aspects of life we are constantly told that a person must, so to speak, get into the water first and learn to swim there, that he must open his eyes first and find the light thus; but when it comes to religion many people expect to have the knowledge of it injected into them while they are asleep, while they are actually refusing to attend or looking the other way, or while they even maintain an irreverent attitude toward it.

The man who says, "You people are always talking about God. I don't believe any such thing. I've never seen him and I'm not interested in his existence. Why should I believe in a God whom I've never seen and whom I don't know. If you have one, show him to me, let me see him"—the person who comes to this or any other kind of investigation in such a state of mind cannot hope to succeed. He must not be surprised that he has no fortune in a search conducted with an irreverence which is fatal and on the assumption that there is nothing to look for.

If I were given a cup which I believed to contain a lump of white hot metal I should certainly not put my naked fingers in to feel it. But why put tongs in when I am not sure there is anything hot in it? I should put in it the type of thing which

will be appropriate in case there is anything hot. Similarly, the mind which draws near to God must be the kind of mind which will be appropriate in case God reveals himself. He that comes near to God must be a believer that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. And if he, in this half-belief which the wider experience of the world already justifies, which is fostered by authority, and which echoes in his heart because of the great revelations of the past, searches God in this spirit, he will certainly find Him.

Even so critical a scholar as Robertson Smith, referring indirectly in one of his works to the value of tradition, says:

> Behind the positive religions which trace their origin to the teachings of great religious innovators, who spoke as the organs of a divine revelation, lies the body of religious usage and belief which cannot be traced to the influence of individual minds. No primitive religion that has moved men has been able to start with a *tabula rasa*. A new scheme of faith can find a hearing only by appealing to religious instincts and susceptibilities that exist in the minds of the audience, and it cannot reach these without taking account of the traditional forms in which all religious feeling is embodied and without speaking a language which men accustomed to these old forms can understand. . . . The precepts of the Pentateuch did not create a priesthood and a sacrificial service on an alto-

> gether independent basis, but only reshaped or remodeled, in accordance with a more spiritual doctrine, institutions of an older type which in many particulars were common to the Hebrews with their heathen neighbors. Everyone who reads the Old Testament with attention is struck with the fact that the origin and rationale of sacrifice are nowhere fully explained; that sacrifice as an essential part of religion is taken for granted as something which is not a doctrine peculiar to Israel but is universally admitted and acted on without as well as within the limits of the chosen people.[1]

As we look around us we see unfortunately that we have no external authority to which we can turn as a universally recognized synod for fixing the norm of Jewish practice and standardizing its development. But if there is no such visible external standard, then instead of each one following his individual caprice and norm, a unifying authority can be found in what Dr. Schechter calls "the collective conscience of catholic Israel as embodied in the universal synagogue." Each age must decide for itself its standard of observance, based obviously on the idea of a continuous Jewish tradition. It is true that for the average individual to learn what this universally accepted practice is, is no easy matter. On the one hand it may appear that it is only the scholar with a knowledge of the history of any

[1] See *Religion of the Semites*, Intro.

Jewish practice and of its progress and development who can be competent to express such an opinion; but in practice it will be found that no such scientific knowledge is necessary, and even the average individual Jew need have no difficulty in deciding what is recognized Jewish practice by bearing in mind the following principles: (1) We can only apply our criterion of recognized usage in the case of those Jews who have still remained loyal to traditional Judaism; the opinions of those who find no continuity in Jewish tradition and Jewish thought and practices and who deny the validity of Jewish law cannot possibly be taken as our standard. (2) The practices of those Jews who have entirely broken with Jewish tradition cannot obviously be taken as a standard for its development.

No form of Jewish life can be said to be traditional unless it is fully in harmony with catholic Jewish thought and practice. In other words, only those forms of thought or practice can be described as Jewish which are fully in harmony with the Judaism of the past and establish with it one organic whole.

It is the living word, the living ceremonials and practices in our synagogues from ages past, which are to be considered and adhered to, yes, even criticized if you will, rather than the dead written formulæ which embody these practices in writing. Even in our scientific investigations into the history and development of Jewish practice, in our attempts

to probe into the basic psychology of Jewish ceremonials, we must carry with us a doctrine of tradition which, though not contained in theological formulæ, is still of the utmost importance for our understanding of Jewish thought. We must recognize everywhere a tradition, a handing down, that has been going on at all times, not only in the sphere of facts and statements, but also in the minds of those who reported the facts and made the statements. It is true that here and there we may recognize certain preconceived notions and ideas by which the views and statements of our ancestors were modified and colored, but to us as Jews there is no such thing as a divorce between Judaism and Jewish tradition. They stand side by side. The traditions of old are not merely written accounts of certain formulæ or customs as embodied in the Jewish codes; they are much more. They are the very spiritual forces by which our ancestors lived and had their being. Man does not live by bread nor by meaningless ceremonial. The secret spirituality of our fathers lay in the fact that in their Ghetto synagogues, with no grace of structure and little dignity of ceremonial, there lay the greatest of all Jewish tradition—the spirit of Jewish life and thought which has been passed on throughout the ages and has been the means of preserving our sacred heritage.

The traditional Jew thus comes to the synagogue not merely as a theist but as a Jew. His Judaism is to him not only a religion of the fleeting present but

also of the past. The great past of Israel and the glorious future which awaits it, the saints and martyrs of former days, and the thinkers and philosophers of the future stand before him summoning him to join hands in one great cause.

The first command of the decalogue, "I am the Lord thy God," teaches the Jew of the existence of a personal God who did not withdraw from the world after having completed the work of creation: nor is He the transcendent deity who, having finished His task, is no longer concerned with its fate and destiny, but a God who loves the beings He has created and cares and watches over them. This command of the decalogue is thus to us of paramount importance. It means that we can bring to the God in whom we believe our difficulties and our temptations. And although we cannot see Him face to face, our limited conception of Him is such that we can regard Him as a personal God whose relations to us are personal. And it is to this personal God in whom we implicitly trust that we can bring our trials and tribulations.

To the Jew, God's oneness thus signifies absolute singleness and His entire difference from all manner of being—material, mental, or spiritual. This is the distinguishing peculiarity of Jewish monotheism. All other forms of being are mere semblances in comparison with Him. The belief in a God, single, incomparable with everything in heaven and earth, cannot permit the intercession of an elevated human

being between God and man such as forms the basis of the creed of our neighbors.

Now, the main basis of Jewish thought and practice is the Torah—the Pentateuch. This has been and always will remain the root of traditional Jewish Life. The modern mind may feel itself here confronted with a difficulty, for it may be asked how it is compatible with modern thought for us to postulate an unchangeable divine Torah, given to us millenniums ago, as the basis of every aspect of life for all time. Jewish tradition, however, now comes to our aid and by leaving the practical application and interpretation of the Torah to the true representatives of the Jewish people it assists in making the Torah a living force to the Jew of all ages.

An erroneous impression has been obtained through the wrong translation of Torah by the word "law." The correct meaning of Torah is doctrine. The Torah was to every Jew in ancient times a living body of doctrine. Every section of Jewry—rich and poor alike—were thus able to devote themselves to its study. This probably also accounts for the fact that a real proletariat never existed in Israel. The poor man, engaged in the most fatiguing labor, could also lead the life of a scholar. Amidst his arduous labors in earning a living the poor Jew would still find some time—very frequently even during the late hours of the night—for the study of Jewish literature. This in itself

had some very important effects. The possession of a knowledge of the Torah by all types of Jews meant the impossibility of a clerical body possessed of a monopoly of learning. There was no caste system in Jewry, and when the old priestly order disappeared the only division of section was that into scholars—diligent students of the Torah—and non-scholars. Another effect of the profound learning in Israel was that no distinction could be drawn between faith and knowledge. Religion did not mean to the Jew faith in some precious treasures which he was forbidden to know. On the other hand, faith was always conceived in consonance with knowledge. Ignorance could not be suffered in the nation. In our daily prayers we include the Talmudic precept that the study of doctrine outweighs all commandments.

To the Rabbis the study of the Torah was in itself a form of worship. They regarded the whole state of man as a state of culture and its flowering and completion as religion or worship. To them religion was no philosophic theorem but an ever-active impulse radiating out into all the activities of life.

We thus see that Judaism cannot be expressed in any rigid formula. It is a living system of life responding to the highest demands of every Jewish heart and to the needs of every Jewish mind. And the Jew of each age may lay special emphasis on those aspects of Jewish thought and doctrine which are brought into prominence by the intellectual

representatives of that time. Jewish thought has been based on the belief that dogma and conduct are not to be placed into two separate and water-tight compartments, but must always work in unison. As life advanced and became more complex the law was reinterpreted to meet its varying conditions. But whilst the Rabbis always attempted to modify Jewish law in accordance with the ever-changing conditions of Jewish life, and even abrogated certain laws when necessity arose, they never claimed authority over man's intellect or conscience. We have a Jewish law and Jewish philosophers, but no systems of philosophy binding for all time. As science advances and the intellectual outlook of the Jew together with that of his gentile neighbor progresses with it, there is no necessity for him to vary his mode of prayer or his daily ceremonial observances in accordance with the ever-changing theories of scientific thought. If, as we have noted, the Jewish form of prayer in the synagogue and Jewish ceremonial observances are the expression of the universal catholic conscience of Israel, and have been adopted as a means of uniting and unifying the various scattered elements of Jewry, then it would merely bring about utter chaos for each group of individuals to modify their form of prayer or their ceremonial observances in accordance with their own individual sympathies or feelings with utter disregard to their effect on the catholic sentiment of world-wide Jewry. Judaism would be thus reduced

to a shadow of its former self and would no longer be worthy of the name it bears.

Traditional Judaism is, therefore, not the dead organism its opponents represent it to be, but a living force constantly developing and adapting itself to the needs and the requirements of the age, though always maintaining a complete unity with Jewish life and Jewish thought. There has always been a continuous process of development and change in the thought of the Jew. The Judaism of the Bible, the Judaism of the Talmud, and the Judaism of the twentieth-century traditional Jew are, in some respects, three different types of Judaism, though they are entirely the result of one continuous process of development. For example, the Rabbis of the Talmud, feeling the severity of many biblical laws, either abrogated them by a legal fiction where necessity demanded or mollified their severity. Thus, capital punishment was made almost entirely impossible; whilst such laws as that in Deuteronomy concerning the putting to death of a rebellious son were put beyond the bounds of possibility.

Similarly, the advances in science and philosophy have resulted in considerable development in Jewish doctrine as well as in their application. In Jewish dogma the main development which has taken place since Bible times is the belief in immortality. Even in the time of the early portions of the Bible this conception must have been known in Israel. Later, in the Book of Psalms, we meet with expres-

sions which show clearly that the soul's immortality was no unfamiliar doctrine. The seventeenth psalm, after referring with disdain to the prosperity of "Men of the world who have their portion in this life," ends with the words, "As for me, I will behold thy face by righteousness. I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." In psalm sixteen, which is recited in the house of mourning, we read, "My heart is glad and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope. For Thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fullness of joys; at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore." The last chapter of Ecclesiastes, in reply to the scepticism of the preceding portions of the book, ends with the words, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." These are but a few of the passages in the Bible showing the belief in the everlastingness of the human spirit. There was no form of pronouncement, however, in this belief until the time of the Rabbis, and even they expressed no clear distinction as to whether material resurrection or spiritual immortality is meant. Later, Maimonides and other medieval Jewish philosophers definitely interpreted these references to resurrection in terms of immortality and assigned them a fundamental place amongst the essentials of Jewish belief.

It is necessary for us to note also that the theories

postulated as to the origin or mode of growth of an institution do not in the slightest affect its importance to us from a specifically Jewish standpoint. For example, scientific criticism may prove an institution to have arisen under the most debased, idolatrous, and anti-Hebraic or anti-Jewish circumstances, but if as a result of centuries of growth and development this institution has won for itself so great a place in catholic Jewish sentiment and thought that it is universally accepted by Jewry as full of spiritual meaning and value, so that, apart from its historic associations, it is to us an expression of our spiritual needs, then the institution is Jewish and as part of Jewish thought and life must be conserved.

For example, one Jewish theologian, in an essay on the origin and function of ceremonies in Judaism, after explaining the meaning of the Oriental custom of removing one's shoes, proceeds to explain the Jewish practice of not entering a place of worship bareheaded. He says, "It is regarded as disrespectful in the East to receive, or to be seen by, strangers bareheaded, and it stands to reason that it is considered by Orientals still more derogatory to the honor of God to stand bareheaded before Him in prayer or in sight of the sanctuary." He then continues, "You observe at once the pivotal question at issue: Are we, as Jews, in Occidental life to be Orientals in the house of God or are we Occidentals in every respect?" In other words, this

writer means to suggest that as we Jews are Occidentals in every aspect of life outside of the synagogue we ought to be Occidental in the synagogue also. Is this really true? Can we Jews truly say that, even merely as a religious body, we are entirely Occidental in every respect? Surely, even the minimum of ceremonialism, to which many of us have cut down our religion and the few festivals to which we ocasionally adhere, are not Occidental but Oriental. Judaism itself is an Oriental religion. It arose in the East, its sources are to be traced to Eastern thought and life; its great prophets whose teachings many of us emphasize so strongly were Orientals; and its ceremonials are based on historical narratives connected with an Oriental people. No! Our adherence to the practice of the wearing of the hat in the synagogue and similar customs is unaffected by their historical origin. We are merely interested in the fact that this, and similar practices, are so inwoven in Jewish life and thought that we have a right to regard them as neither Oriental nor Occidental, but as Jewish. Once a practice has been made Jewish by history it cannot be disregarded but must command our respect regardless of any scientific criticism against it.

We are sometimes told that Judaism is so wide and so all-embracing that it can include almost every type of thought so long as its basis is pure monotheism. And it has become particularly fashionable nowadays for many Jews, to whom

Judaism means "Jewish Nationalism," devoid of all religion, to cite such a Talmudic passage as "Even if a Jew has sinned, he still remains a Jew," in order to show how liberal the Rabbis of old were toward those who were not observant of Jewish practice in their time. How foolish! The Declaration of Independence, emphasizing the equality of all men, is the great charter of American liberty, yet we have, in this country, an organization known as the Ku Klux Klan, consisting solely of those who consider themselves as one-hundred-percent Americans, standing for what they regard as pure Americanism and yet acting in a manner which is contrary to the very basic principles of American thought. True, the Jew who has divested himself of all Jewish religious practices still remains a Jew racially, but his whole mode of life is certainly unJewish, just as the members of the Ku Klux Klan are still Americans although the basis of their organization is contrary to the fundamental principles of American thought.

We must realize, once for all, that Judaism cannot be modified day after day and hour after hour so as to satisfy the fads and fancies of every type of individual. One cannot be everything if one wishes to be anything. We cannot eliminate from Judaism its essentials of faith and hope and make it so flexible as to adapt itself to every type of circumstance, nor are we rendering a service to Judaism or to ourselves by describing it as a kind of enlightened hedonism or moderate epicureanism.

"Give me a theme," the little poet cried,
"And I will do my part."
" 'Tis not a theme you need," the world replied;
"You need a heart."

R. W. Gilder: *Wanted A Theme.*

CHAPTER IX

SHOULD WE CHANGE OUR FORM OF SERVICE?

Spiritual condition of Jewry similar to the Rome of the second century—No central authority—Modern notion of mental progress—Final evidence of religion is a psychological one——Two opposite conceptions of Judaism recently evolved—Meaning of authority in Judaism—God and Torah—Judaism cannot be expressed in any rigid formula—Prayer the expression of the universal catholic conscience of Israel—Traditional Judaism a living organism—Dissatisfaction with the traditional prayerbook—The value of religious ceremonies and exercise of imagination—Emotional value of religion—Kol Nidrei—Significance of Hebrew in our service.

THE spiritual condition of Jewry today reminds one of the racy description of Lucian of the Rome of the second century. The old beliefs were dying and their place was being taken by some of the most ridiculous notions. The empire was simply full of impostors and soothsayers, prophets and jugglers, of every description, whose success was in direct proportion to their pretension and effrontery. Similarly, in Jewry today all sorts of quack remedies are proposed as a means of curing our spiritual ills. The great tragedy of Jewish life is the fact that there is everywhere a breaking away from the ancient Jewish landmarks, without anything being done to replace

them. The spiritual basis of Jewish life is being everywhere destroyed and we are at present without a central authority which can command the allegiance of traditional Jewry.

The problem of the preservation of Judaism seems today greater than ever it was. With the bond of control so relaxed as it is today; with our traditional practice so shaken; with the mind of the average Jewish layman so hungry and yet so poor, so interested and yet so distracted upon final problems; with the rising generation in independence, till in an evil sense the child is father of the man; and with the rising classes so ignorant of responsibility, the necessity for us to learn the lesson of obedience is now more urgent than ever. It has rightly been said:

> The vice of the modern notion of mental progress is that it is always somehow concerned with the breaking of bonds, the effacing of boundaries, the casting away of dogmas. But if there be such a thing as mental growth, it must mean the growth into more and more definite convictions, into more and more dogmas. The human brain is a machine for coming to conclusions; if it cannot come to conclusions it is rusty. When we hear of a man too clever to believe, we are hearing of something having almost the character of a contradiction in terms. It is like hearing of a nail that was too good to hold down a carpet, or a bolt that was too strong

> to keep a door shut. . . . If then, there is to be a mental advance, it must be a mental advance in the construction of a philosophy of life. And that philosophy of life must be right and the others wrong.

Like the ship that has lost its compass and strays as chance and wind direct, many a Jew wanders haphazard through the space formerly occupied by God and Jewish tradition and now rendered a desert by modern thought and rationalism. He has lost his faith and with it his hopes. What is to be done? How is a feeling for Judaism to be brought into the hearts of the Jewish people? We are told that men must be brought back to Jewish study and worship, but the real end of worship is not to root men in tradition or to drill them in theology and logic. It is to find the mystic chord which vibrates to the breath of the Unseen, to develop the spiritual sense in men. Bible, tradition, history, and theology all have their religious uses, but it is not upon any of them that religion ultimately rests. The final evidence of religion is a psychological one. It rests not on what man has done but on what man is. We might compare in many respects the part played by the spiritual sense in relation to religion to that played by the musical sense in relation to its world. We know of a history of music and a logic of music, but the true musical sense is not an answer of the intellect but a deep thrill of consciousness which, as the harmonic sense develops, becomes more vividly

conscious of the reality that answers to it. Similarly, religion mingles with reason, but is nevertheless as remote from it as is the emotion raised by a Beethoven sonata. Affluence of ideas and wealth of philosophical thought are excellent things in religion, but these are not the only or the highest things necessary. The success of the teacher does not depend on his intellectual range but on his relation to the spiritual world.

Two opposite conceptions of Judaism have recently been evolved. On the one hand we have an extreme rationalist camp acknowledging only the racial character of the Jew, on the other hand a school of Judaism acknowledging only the religious conceptions of the Jewish faith. On the one hand many Jews endeavor to strip Judaism of all its national elements and to preserve it merely as a religious denomination. On the other hand we have the Jew who, having lost all his religious affiliations, still feels himself knitted to the Jewish people by strong racial sentiments and desires the preservation of his people as a racial entity.

We must realize at the outset that Judaism cannot be described as a creed in the modern sense of the term, which implies something foreign and external to man's own knowledge and received only in deference to the weight of authority. When the medieval Jewish philosophers formulated the principles of Judaism so as to give certain beliefs a standing similar to that held by the "dogmas" of the

Christian church, they were faced with considerable opposition. Moses Mendelssohn, in his *Jerusalem,* argues that Judaism has no "symbolical books" or "articles of faith," and it never commanded the Jews to believe but rather "to know" and "to recognize."

Judaism certainly does not insist on blind adherence to authority. When Moses was asked to restrain Eldad and Medad from prophesying in the camp, his reply—which has rightly been described as the very essence of freedom of thought—was, "Would that all the people of the Lord were prophets." There are no ready-made beliefs in Judaism which one must blindly accept. As Mendelssohn points out, the basis of Judaism is reason and understanding, for the Bible never commands one to believe but merely says "Thou shalt do" and "Thou shalt not do."

When we speak of authority in Judaism we mean something entirely different from that interpreted as authority in other religions. Judaism has no definite dogmas and no pope who can lay down the law. There is no Jewish church and there are no Jewish sacraments. There are no articles of faith in which the Jew must believe if he is to be saved, for Judaism on the contrary attaches the utmost importance to thought and study. Liberty of thought and liberty of speech are the inherent rights of every Jew.

Let us now proceed to consider the question of the reform of the ritual. The Jewish philosophical con-

ception of prayer is beautifully explained in Jehuda Halevi's *Al Khazari.* "Why should a man recite his prayer for a multitude in a multitude? Would not a man's soul be purer and his mind less abstracted if he were to recite his prayers for himself?" are the questions asked. Then comes the reply: "A person who prays for himself is like one who retires alone into his house, refusing to assist his fellow citizens in the repair of their walls. His expenditure is as great as his loss. He, however, who joins the majority spends little yet remains in safety, because one replaces the defect of the other. It is interesting to note that Plato describes what is expended on behalf of the law as, the 'portion of the whole.' The individual who neglects that portion of the whole which is the basis of the wealth of the commonwealth, of which he forms a part, in the belief that he does better in spending it on himself, sins against the commonwealth and more against himself . . . for the relation of the individual to the commonwealth is as the relation of the single limb to the body. Among actions this is represented by Sabbath, Holy Days . . . and similar institutions. Among words it is prayer, blessings, and thanksgivings."

According to the Jewish idea in prayer the individual must always feel himself linked to the rest of his brethren. This was the reason why the Rabbis spoke of the synagogue as being the only place where prayer is truly heard and emphasized. Also, no man should be away from the house of worship

at the time when the congregation is at prayer, for that is the most acceptable time for worship.

It is of importance to note that, after an unbroken development of about two thousand years, the traditional synagogue service remains uniform except for some slight variances of *minhag,* or custom. During the period of the second Temple one of the main functions of the ritual was to unite Israel in the Diaspora by focusing the eyes of all Jews throughout their dispersion upon the great religious center of their people. In order that every Jew should feel that he had contributed his mite toward the rites of the national sanctuary, it was arranged that the cost of the daily sacrifices was to be provided from public funds. Whilst the Temple was still in existence groups of Israelites used to meet together outside of Jerusalem and read passages from the Bible, whilst assemblies and meetings for prayer were held on all important occasions. Side by side with the Temple worship there was, therefore, another form of service in existence which was able to replace it and perform its function when the terrible catastrophe took place in 70 C.E. When the temple was in existence the priests used to retire every morning and hold a short service, which forms the nucleus of our present morning service.

Our dissatisfaction with the traditional prayer-book is due, in great measure, to the fact that we fail to remember that public worship is a vehicle for the common needs and aspirations of the Jewish

people. Our synagogue service is primarily the expression of collective Israel. Amongst the many prayers we recite publicly in the synagogue service, it is only natural that there should be some which do not respond to our individual moods as readily as others. But here and there our heart may become aglow by some phrase in the liturgy, and we may be suddenly moved to a feeling of the greatness of the divine. We cannot expect that prayers which have been specially arranged and designed for public worship should, on every occasion, satisfy the sentiments of each individual congregant. It is the feelings and sentiments of Jewry as a whole which we must think of and consider in preference to our own individual feelings.

We cannot accept the individualistic standpoint which measures every aspect and detail of Jewish thought and life by its own whims and caprices, and we must realize that all our efforts to change the service will prove fruitless unless we come to the synagogue imbued with deeper spirituality. In the words of one Jewish teacher:

> You may modernize the prayer-book as much as you please, you may remove all of its anachronisms, its supplications for the restoration of the sacrificial rite, its petitions for Zion, its anthropomorphisms, but you will not, thereby, insure prayerful feeling. This only the worshipper himself can supply; and he can supply it only if he bear the elements of it in

> his own breast—in his faith in the Unseen, and his desire to surrender himself to the Unseen. It is because people forget this fundamental truth that so many unmerited accusations are brought against our public worship. They condemn the service when they ought rather to condemn themselves. They leave the synagogue unrefreshed, unhelped—to use their own expressions—irritated, alienated. But they do not see that much of this failure is chargeable on their own lack of devoutness, their own want of spiritual preparedness, or a frame of mind, cold, sceptical, unresponsive, which would suffice to make even the ideal service uninspiring and barren.

It is true, of course, that many a modern mind feels that some of the prayers in the traditional prayer-book need reinterpretation, but this can be done without difficulty by each individual Jew. Is it not preferable for our form of worship to remain, at least for the present, and for each individual Jew to satisfy his personal demands by modifying his interpretation so that it will be fully in accordance with his own intellectual requirements? For example, no modern Jew feels that he would care to see the restoration of sacrifices in the Palestine of tomorrow. But this should not cause any difficulty, for surely the words of the prayer-book, used throughout the Diaspora by catholic Israel and hallowed by generations as a

means of uniting all the divergent elements of scattered Jewry, can still be retained by us with a modified interpretation and explained as expressing our age-long desire for the restoration of a national form of worship in our ancient homeland.

The true functions of the synagogue are best summarized in the words of Solomon (I Kings viii.). It was to be a house for the name of the Lord, God of Israel, and there was placed the ark wherein is the covenant of the Lord which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt. The synagogue is thus, in the first instance, the central place of worship for the scattered congregations of Israel. It is the means of uniting the different links of Israel into a unity with the aid of a common prayer-book. Certain expressions in that book may make little or no appeal to this or that member of the congregation, but of this we can take no regard, for it may be due, in most instances, to his inability to appreciate the true function of the synagogue.

In no religion does the language of the liturgy lay claim to scientific exactness, and when our scientific knowledge comes along and proves it inexact, we admit the charge. The traditional Jew realizes that the function of religion is to appeal to the imagination, and conscious as he is of the fact that the language of the liturgy cannot always pretend to scientific exactness, he prefers to leave something to the imagination.

Furthermore, we must learn to appreciate and understand fully the symbolic meaning of Jewish practice and ceremonial. Imagination has played and always will play a most important part in the building up of our religious ideas. The power of imagining—what the Germans call *Einbildungskraft* —has been a most potent factor in every religion. Does not our religious vocabulary, no matter what aspect of theological thought to which we are attached, consist almost entirely of images?

Abstract ideas can never satisfy the soul longing for God, nor can doctrine alone bring it in touch with the great source of all love and wisdom. It is only by means of religious *acts* that our emotions are aroused and our spiritual faculties developed. Ceremonies are our great educators, for they express to all of us alike the universal language of faith and loyalty. They are the very poetry of religion investing life with the beauty of holiness. Mortal man cannot do without signs and symbols to remind him of his duty. The sceptic, unmoved by argument, is nevertheless moved to tears by the performance of some ceremonial act which recalls to his mind various long-forgotten memories connected therewith. It is absurd to argue that most ancient ceremonials are obsolete and unnecessary and what we require is the removal of their outward restraint and compulsion. For surely an examination and analysis of ourselves suggests that even our greater needs are these ceremonies as incentives and inner motives giving sanc-

tity and concentration to life. Before we throw over some of these ancient forms let us attempt to discover the secret of their vitality and determine whether the growing opposition to many traditional Jewish practices is not merely a by-product of the force of ignorance.

The word "ceremony" is connected with the Latin *caerimonia,* which means reverence and awe, whilst the plural *caerimoniae* is a term used to denote religious rites which were in ancient Rome of a magical character. Ceremonies are not mere playful creations of individuals. They are, to man in his primitive stage, a real method of worship. To him the ceremony itself constitutes religion. When he advances, however, to a stage of civilization he begins to realize that the ceremony is but a means to an end.

The religious ceremony, however, is an indispensable form of expressing the religious feelings prompted by the various events of life. The religious cravings of man can never be satisfied by mere abstract truths or ethical practices. Man needs the religious ceremonial to impress him with the nearness of the Divine. He needs ceremonies which can outwardly express his thoughts and feelings, whilst they inwardly hallow and enrich his life. Religious acts awaken the sense of duty in man, for they develop his spiritual faculties and appeal to his emotional nature. They are the educators and monitors of the people; for to all alike, young and

old, simple and sage, they speak the language of faith and hope.

Ceremonial means the outward adornment of a function which helps to express its significance or add to its impressiveness. It is employed on almost all important occasions and in every department of life. We shake hands, bow, and take off our hats, and we mean these actions to express something that is in our minds. Some people do these things elaborately and make much of them; others just go through with them because they are customary. In the same way many people enjoy the organized parade of a state function or a mass demonstration, but others are not interested in the slightest degree. Yet ceremonial, in one form or another, does in fact appeal to nearly everyone. For the same reason the Jew makes use of ceremonial in his religion, as a help to worship and a method of adding to the impressiveness of the service.

We are all agreed that some sort of ceremonial must be employed in almost every form of human activity, and a brief survey of our daily habits will show us that it is practically impossible to perform any action repeatedly and habitually without acquiring a set manner of performing it; in addition to the doing of the thing there is the question, "How is it to be done?" A simple instance from everyday life will illustrate this point. Dinner is a universal human institution, with marked ceremonies attending it. We all lay the table in much the same way;

knives and forks, plates and dishes, each have pretty much their own regular places on the board and their own regular methods of use; and, in every ordinary household, the pudding is reserved until the meat course has been finished and the guest is served before the members of the family. We may not be conscious of the fact, but, in truth, the eating of our dinner involves us in a most elaborate and detailed system of ceremonial. The same applies to public worship. Certain things have to be done and it is impossible to avoid certain ways of doing them. The question, fundamentally, is between doing things in a lifeless and ugly fashion and doing them in such a way as to appeal to a man's sense of beauty and order.

People's tastes vary considerably and what is satisfying to one man may not be satisfactory to another. There are many Jews of very deep piety and devotion who prefer a simple, undecorated form of worship, without ceremony. They regard ceremonial as a definite hindrance to their deep spirituality and piety. On the other hand, there is the opposite type of people who are emotional and highly æsthetic, who are moved in spirit by expressive ceremonies and exquisite rites. Art, of every kind, appeals to them. Architecture elevates them and fine music rouses them to worship.

After all, religion, if it is to be effective, must meet the world on its own ground. Imagination must be taken note of and its power fully exercised,

for religious worship cannot be left to die spiritually of cold and starvation. The world, with all its pageantry, its impetuous rush of life, its appeal to the things of sight and sense, imposes upon the imagination and gradually crowds out and overpowers the things of the spirit. It is for this reason that Judaism steps down into the arena and with its grandeur—every facet of which speaks of God—opposes the glamour and attraction of the gilded ceremonial of the world. If, therefore, certain ceremonials do not exactly appeal to us, we must not be too impatient of them but think of our neighbor and the influence it may have in bringing him to true religion.

Furthermore, let us bear in mind that our great historic observances are the unifying influences amongst us. It is Jewish ceremonial which feeds our racial consciousness and preserves our unity. When some Jews merely stress the ethical and universal side of Judaism and attempt to create a form of Judaism devoid of all ceremonialism, surely we can point out to them that even their form of Judaism, devoid of all specific Jewish tradition, could never have come into existence were it not for the traditional Jewish life and ceremonialism of the past. Would Judaism have remained in existence until today were it not that Jews have always celebrated the great festival of freedom and liberty by the *seder* service; that since their political existence as a people ended, they have continued to mourn year

after year for the loss of their national life and that they have always continued to observe traditional practices which have kept them in constant touch with the great past of their people?

The time may come when man, raised to the world of spirit, and being no longer in a frame of clay, will be able to dispense with ceremonies, and the words of one Rabbinic dictum (Niddah 61, B), "The Ceremonial Laws will loose their validity in the world to come," will be fulfilled; but so long as man is mortal, these signs and memorials of his outward duties cannot possibly be dispensed with in his daily life.

In connection with the desired change in our ritual there is another most important consideration we must bear in mind. There are other values in religion besides the intellectual value for giving us a truly accurate doctrine. There is the emotional value—something that is indefinable and escapes us as we try to pin it down and exactly describe it. Nevertheless, it is a value we all feel as we read the Bible and certain portions of the service. We bring an entirely wrong standard to some of these portions of traditional Jewish service if we coldly analyze them and treat them as scientific statements of theological truth; and yet, although they may even at times become grotesque, if we were to apply to them so inappropriate a standard, we feel we would not be without them, for they have the power of stirring or moving our hearts as no statement of abstract doctrine can possibly do.

There are two faculties in us which we might specially consider—the artistic and the scientific—and these differ very considerably, both in intention and result, as well as in procedure. The artistic faculty works by insight and imagination. It tries to create a form by which it can represent the emotions which it pleases. It thus dwells upon details and, taking some aspects of nature for example, feels that if only it can penetrate its inner mysteries it can find there the very incarnation of reality.

The scientific faculty works in the reverse way. It describes criticizes, analyzes, and dissects, and tests the validity of the initial art, criticizing and changing wherever it desires.

Now our desires for change in the service nowadays are due in many cases to the fact that the artistic faculty within is being crushed by the scientific. We forget that the poet's innate selection of a theological truth is often at least as satisfying as the scientist's deliberate choice, for it is the artistic faculty which first works within us. We are drawn to worship by a mysterious inner force within, which gives us an artistic representation of the divine which we cannot explain, and then our scientific faculty sets out to criticize and test the validity of this initial art. But let us remember that whilst the scientific and intellectual faculty of man is of course of the utmost value, at times it has proved itself a real hindrance. Even *intellectual* truth in order to be properly inculcated needs psychic and aesthetic

factors, for words rarely express fully our thoughts. This is the reason why men have often used expressions in religion which, when dissected by the scientific faculty, seem difficult to comprehend. There is no doubt that the poet or artist has often expressed the truth much better than the theologian, for art is a universal language, common to all mankind. It has truly been said that "cogitative words at best can only represent a part, art can suggest the whole." Of course the ideal is the intellectual, psychic, and aesthetic elements all working together in worship which can bring man nearer to a true understanding of the kingdom of God.

In order to understand this thought more clearly, let us take as an illustration Psalm 93, which forms part of the Friday evening service:

The Lord reigneth; He is clothed in majesty;
The Lord is clothed, He hath girded Himself with strength,
Yea, the world is established, that it cannot be moved.
Thy throne is established of old;
Thou art from everlasting.

. . . . . .

The floods have lifted up, O Lord,
The floods have lifted up their voice;
The floods lift up their roaring,
Above the voices of many waters,
The mighty breakers of the sea,
The Lord on high is mighty.

. . . . . .

Thy testimonies are very sure
Holiness becometh Thy house,
O Lord, for evermore.

There is no doubt that few of us actually appreciate its beauty and extraordinary religious emotionalism, though from the point of view of theological doctrine it teaches little not to be found in other parts of the Bible. This psalm is a doxology of God, the majestic King who reigns supreme, and was read on the sixth day of the week in the temple, because some of its phrases point to the fixed order connected with the work of creation which God, having completed on the sixth day, began to reign over. God has proclaimed himself King, and whatever opposition may arise his throne is unmoved; He has reigned, does reign, and will reign forever. No matter how His foes may rage, the eternal King, clothed in His regal apparel, ascends His lofty throne, and as His subjects see the King in His beauty, they proclaim with joy, "JHVH is King." Furthermore, as men gird up their loins for running or working, so God appears to His people, girded with His omnipotence and ready for action.

The very fact that God is King in heaven gives terrestrial things stability. Lawlessness is the result of godlessness. So long as God reigns there is security for humanity, but when He withdraws His presence, lawlessness and chaos dominate. But again, the psalmist sees some great-world powers threatening to overspread the world and he sym-

bolizes them by the rivers. "Sometimes men are furious in words—they lift up their voice; and at other times they rise to acts of violence—they lift up their waves; but the Lord has control over them in either case." The ungodly are all foam and fury, noise and bluster, during their little hour, and then the tide turns or the storm is hushed, and we hear no more of them; while the kingdom of the eternal abides in the grandeur of its power, for God is "mightier than many waters" and all their noise is to Him but a sound. Finally, God's testimonies are very sure. His revelation is beyond question: "As the rock remains unmoved amid the tumult of the sea, so does divine truth resist all the currents of man's opinion and the storm of human controversy."

As we rest from our mental and physical toil on the Sabbath day and reflect during the period of rest and worship on the storm-tossed world in which we live, and the rebellious opposition of lawlessness which still exists in this twentieth century, we acknowledge as Jews that the stability of the world is due to God's supremacy over all forms of nature. And so no matter how high the waters of affliction may be, or how great our difficulties may have been during the week, "the Lord on High is mightier than they."

The systematic theologian with no sense of poetry may weave the material round some of our hymns into a consistent bit of theology which will move you to ridicule instead of inspiring you, and

yet somehow, when you sing these hymns in the synagogue, surrounded by other worshipers, do you not feel that your heart is stirred and uplifted and swayed by them? You feel that it is poetry that you are singing, not theology, and the thrill that goes through you with the swing and beauty of the music, and with the singing of the vast multitude, is fittingly matched by such language, for its poetic description of God and nature goes back to the very dawn of human thought. You are not ashamed, therefore, of singing the hymn with all your religious fervor and enthusiasm, for you feel that it appeals to something within you other than your cold, abstract reason.

Let us illustrate this further by the Kol Nidrei. It is true that, in spite of the importance which is attached to it by traditional Jews, much can be said in favor of its being omitted from the liturgy. It is by no means one of the oldest portions of the prayer-book and many former Rabbis of distinction have doubted the advisability of its inclusion in the Yom Kippur service. In the ninth century we hear that the Jewish authorities were not at all agreed about its adoption. Whilst Rabbi Paltoi Gaon was in its favor, five distinguished Rabbis were opposed to it. Similarly, Rab Amram, in his famous Siddur, belittles the importance attached to the Kol Nidrei. Why is it then that the Kol Nidrei has such a powerful hold on so many Jews, even those who perhaps are usually known as "Yom

Kippur Jews?" Why is it that it impresses the least impressible of worshipers? Is it not due to two considerations—the historical circumstances connected with its first introduction into the Eve of Atonement service, and, above all, the melody.

During the persecution of the Jews in Spain the Roman Catholic Church often extracted a promise from the Jews to abjure their religion upon penalty of death. One can imagine these poor Jews yearning for intercourse with their brothers, Jews at heart in every sense of the term, and still having been compelled to declare openly their severance from the Jewish people. These renegades were particularly anxious to join their brethren in worship at least once a year. How were they to be absolved from the promise which they had made to leave Jews and Judaism entirely? We can easily understand how the practice arose for the heads of the community as its representatives to beg permission from all to pray with the renegades who would come stealing into the synagogue on the eve of the Day of Atonement. There may be no renegades entering the synagogue now, but the Kol Nidrei has still its lesson to teach the Jew. We read in the Bible that "When a man voweth or sweareth an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth." The vow was to the Jew something to be scrupulously observed. And the Kol Nidrei can still be regarded as a testimony of the sacredness

which the Jew has always attached to a promise. But the main importance attached to the Kol Nidrei seems to be due primarily to the influence of its haunting melody, which has become classical: "The shrill crescendo near the beginning, the staccato notes in the middle, and the cry of triumph at the end—who, that has heard them once, can ever forget their magic?"

The Hebrew language, Jewish ceremonial, and Jewish tradition and observance are the only means by which our religious tie can be maintained. They are the only means by which the brotherhood of all Jews can be preserved, keeping us apart from the members of other religious denominations and yet in no way preventing our living with them in the completest harmony and sympathy. Hebrew has always acted as a bond, uniting the Jews throughout the world; it has been one of the main forces preventing our extinction as a people. We are told in Rabbinic literature that one of the reasons why Israel deserved to be redeemed from Egypt was their retention of Hebrew as their language. Our national language has done much to save us from race extinction, and without it our racial consciousness would disappear.

What is the meaning of the attempts made in some circles to reduce Hebrew in our service to a minimum, if not to eliminate it entirely? We are constantly being told that it is preferable to pray devoutly in the vernacular which the worshiper

understands than in a language which he does not follow. But surely the substitution of English for Hebrew in our synagogue services will never solve our religious difficulties. How can we be true and faithful Jews without knowing our ancestral tongue? How can we regard the Bible as a literature peculiarly our own without knowing or understanding the language in which it was written? Surely the claims of Hebrew are so inextricably bound with our Jewish life and thought that we cannot abolish one without doing away with the other. And, curiously enough, the desire to eliminate Hebrew from the studies of our children comes at a time when there are so many movements on foot for the revival of ancient tongues. Many small European peoples, whose contributions to the world are but nought compared to ours, are reviving their national language with the utmost enthusiasm and teaching it to their children with the utmost pride. Why are Jewish parents eliminating Hebrew everywhere from its place in our educational system? We are told that the curriculum of our schools is so overcrowded that there is actually no time for Hebrew study and that the subjects that our children learn must be confined to those which are essential for success in life. But surely we cannot expect our children to be successful in maintaining a Jewish consciousness and an interest in things Jewish if they are utterly ignorant of our sacred language. Our Jewish girls cannot be expected to become true mothers in

Israel if, in spite of all the time they spend in acquiring those accomplishments which modern life demands, there is no attempt made to find some time for Hebraic studies.

We see, therefore, as a result of our discussion, that in order to succeed in our efforts to understand the traditional Jewish service, we need more than a mere cursory knowledge of Jewish theology. We need to have a knowledge of the Hebrew language and to think not only of its theological doctrines, but also of that element of emotional value in which the service is couched, which does not suffer itself to be defined in a precise way, but is an atmosphere that we must drink in, feeling that it fills and irradiates our souls. Though the language of some of our prayers may not work into our schemes of theology or lend itself to a scientific statement of doctrine, nevertheless we feel that it speaks to something within our hearts. It is deeper than all our reasons; it touches us at the very elemental basis of our being, and, as we read or chant these words, they stimulate us with an emotion which can neither be understood nor explained by the cold reasoned facts of theology.

We must conclude this discussion by observing that whilst there are numerous difficulties in the practice of traditional Judaism in the Diaspora, they have not arisen out of the essence of Judaism itself. They are practical difficulties which stand in the way of living the Jewish life. Surrounded every-

where as the Jew is by an un-Jewish and, in many places, an anti-Jewish environment, obstacles are constantly presenting themselves which prevent his leading a truly Jewish life. But if many of the teachers of Judaism not only realized themselves, but also taught their flocks, that those fundamentals and ethical values taught by our religion cannot be possibly preserved unless they find expression in *practical* observance, there would be much stronger resistance—even in the hostile environment by which the Jew is surrounded—to the temptations to which he succumbs at present.

CHAPTER X

SUMMARY

Much that passes for Judaism nowadays is "morality touched with emotion"—Cause of chaos of American Jewry due to lack of authority—Failure to rationalize Judaism—Solid foundations of traditional Judaism—Need to interpret the old truths of Judaism in contemporary language—Development is not synonymous with reform—Necessity for a "reasoned" sympathy with Judaism—"Present renaissance" in Hebrew learning may lead to higher appreciation of true spirit of Judaism.

THERE are many movements in American Israel today, all of which claim to stand for the conservation of Judaism, and we are tempted to ask the adherents of these movements whether they mean thereby a Jewish conservation or merely the conservation of a Judaism withered of its essential characteristics, so that it is barely recognizable from any other faith. Matthew Arnold's famous definition of religion as "morality touched with emotion" is not an untrue description of much that passes for Judaism in the eyes of many Jews nowadays. There are of course wide circles in which much more than this is alive, but there is a widespread deficiency of intellectual grip as well as of definite devotional practice.

Pascal was right after all when he said that there

are two attitudes and two only which are worthy of a reasonable man—either to serve God with his whole heart because he knows Him, or to seek Him with his whole heart because he knows Him not.

Disbelief in traditional Jewish practice seems to be the fashion today, and to observe even occasionally some traditional Jewish ceremonies seems to very many intelligent Jews a confession of weakness and obsolete mentality, needing apology and a decent reticence. In the words of one writer, "They feel that they have got beyond the traditional ceremonialism of Judaism and come out on the other side." Amongst the Jews in England and America, there seems everywhere a feeling of uncertainty and bewilderment, and it has rightly been said that the Great War and its experiences have shattered the very foundations of traditional Jewish life in Eastern Europe and have had the effect of weakening many a Jew's liberal faith in progress without strengthening his faith in God. The tragedy is that this hopeless uncertainty which characterizes Jewish life of today has caused many Jews to regard any form of positive creed with distaste, and as a result they have drifted away from all forms of belief. The traditional Jew has thus been for some time a *persona non grata* in the so-called higher circles of American Jewish life. Again, the danger to Judaism in this country does not lie in any actual change of beliefs but in a sluggish indifference, resulting from that betterment of our material civilization which

is causing so many Amercian Jews to consort with any belief. Society is pleasure-seeking and indifferent; the industrial world ill-guided and in a state of transition which involves a certain antagonism to recognized tradition. Political thought seems in utter confusion, giving little sense of confidence or security. Science in its strides seems only to sap the old positions without substituting any acceptable alternative. What seems curious is that many Jews who proudly declare that they refuse to be terrified by one form of authority are so readily terrified by another. They reject with contempt the religious authority of traditional Judaism but readily accept in its place some of the most absurd oracles of the day.

We need to realize the value of the symbolic, the figurative, and the decorative beauty of the archaic. Words of the earlier centuries may not always appear apt for minds of today but the spirit behind them is the same, and the retention of these old formulae and prayers has great value in preserving the long continuity of Jewish worship and tradition, and in linking us with those of previous ages who, with the same ills and the same adversities and the same faults as ourselves, have approached the same God.

If we set to work to rationalize expressions of idealism and erect a structure which will receive the approval of the cultured few and satisfy the worldly wisdom of a utilitarian age, our efforts are doomed

to failure. Many trees may appear untidy, cankered, gnarled, and split, the mountainside is full of flaws and useless cracks and broken rock, but can we imitate the beauty of a tree or the glory of a mountain by ingenious workmanship? If Judaism is to become a living force in this country, if it is to exert its influence not merely over the docile children of orthodoxy but over the multitudes, the synagogue as a living force must recover its capacity and moral right to speak with authority in the name of the living God. The cause of the chaos into which American Israel has fallen is due largely to the lack of authority, and American Jews in their attempts to progress *in* Judaism have progressed *from* it. We must realize that authority is the inevitable form under which education and social training invariably begin, for in every sphere of human interest and in every relationship of human life, whether we deal with the spheres of religion or morality or human culture generally, the individual must begin by sitting at the feet of tradition if he is to enter into any spiritual inheritance which is of value. The failure of many Jews in their attempts to rationalize Judaism is due primarily to two causes. In the first place, they do not realize that religion, as such, can never be fully understood. There is more in religion than can be in any adequate sense grasped by the mind, and this accounts for the fact that it must always speak in the language of metaphor and symbol. In the words of one religious thinker, "A

God who is wholly unknown, of course, could not be worshiped, but a God who is completely understood would be no longer a possible object of worship." An attempt, therefore, to rationalize Judaism by turning it into a philosophy means to turn it into something other than itself. Secondly, we must always bear in mind that Judaism is a positive and historical religion and cannot be fully understood independently of its own historical tradition.

There is no doubt that on the whole the mind of the younger generation is dissatisfied with the immediate past. It is particularly dissatisfied with sectarianism, with party cries and catchwords. It seeks a faith to live by and it is disposed to suspect that truth is somehow to be found in the faith of our fathers. There is a profound respect for sincerity and whole-heartedness and a readiness to recognize that religion, if it is to mean anything, must in the last resort mean everything.

We are constantly being told that with the development of modern thought traditional Judaism is doomed, and some have even argued that the very props and pillars by which our religion has been buttressed have given way entirely and traditional Judaism is thus left without any solid foundation. It is for us to examine this assertion. Are we justified in arguing that, because a system is devoid of "solid foundation," in the popular sense of the term, it is therefore possessed of no stability? It

has been pointed out by many scientists, and often emphasized by Sir Oliver Lodge, that it is the absence of material foundation that makes the earth itself so secure, and the absence of anything that may crumble or decay is a safeguard rather than a danger. We might be anxious about the stability and durability of the earth if it were based upon a pedestal or otherwise solidly supported. As it is, it floats securely in the emptiness of space. Furthermore, the persistence of its diurnal spin is not maintained by any special mechanism, but by the absence of anything to stop it. Again, the body of scientific truth rests on no solitary material fact or group of facts but on a basis of harmony and consistency between facts. The very basis of our adherence to traditional Judaism lies in the fact that, whilst it takes account of the rational, the physical, and the historical, it is not based specifically on any one of those, and yet it is based on all of these; like the city in "Gareth and Lynette," of which it was said.

> The city is built
> To music, therefore never built at all
> And therefore built forever.

The very strength of traditional Judaism lies in the fact that it is not based on the "solid foundation" of certain "historical events" connected with the life of any individual or movement, and whilst these Jewish edifices which our fathers raised are certainly based on the Torah and on the history of

our people and on reason, they are also based on man's nature as a whole.

We Jews must realize that if we are to succeed in our search for truth we must learn to rely upon and trust not only our powers of abstract reasoning but the whole of our faculties. The whole of our mental and spiritual capacities must be trained if we are to be true to the whole of reality. If one denies that there is any beauty in vibrating catgut and iron, we cannot prove to him that he is wrong. All that we can ask him to do is to listen to a violin sonata. A priggish precision of expression is quite unsuited to worship, and ancient expressions, phrases, and formulæ, some of which have been in use for centuries must be respected, for words and phrases can touch the emotion as music can, without being too closely scrutinized by the intellect.

By all means let us do our utmost for the conservation of Judaism, but the Judaism which we conserve must not be a Judaism devoid of its essential characteristics and distinctive features. It must be a Jewish Judaism and our conservation must be a Jewish conservation.

But how can we expect our modern young men and women to remain with us when even the spiritual food that might satisfy their souls is offered to them in a most unacceptable manner? We need to interpret some of the old truths of Judaism in fresh and contemporary language so as to arouse new springs of emotion and reveal heights which

have never been glimpsed before. One feels at times that the attitude of some of our young people toward traditional Judaism is the attitude of those who would take reprisals on a weakened tyrant.

Hitherto our Rabbis have been content to cater only to simple believers, whilst little, if anything, has been done for the growing population of adults of both sexes possessing questioning minds. Our young people, particularly, may pass through a stage of inner scepticism or overt denial. They may for the time being abandon many Jewish practices. Nevertheless, respect for personality demands that their implicit assertion of intellectual maturity and freedom should not be discouraged but welcomed. It is especially during the period that they are thinking for themselves that we need to give them all the intellectual and spiritual help they are willing to accept toward an understanding of the rational basis of the doctrines and practices which they were taught at an earlier stage "on authority." They must be taught that if they hold fast and are intellectually both candid and humble they will be enabled eventually once more to return to positive convictions, with the advantage this time that their faith will be based on knowledge and will thus be considerably strengthened.

What then are the general lines on which we, as Jews and modern men, aspire to move? We are fundamentally Jews, belonging to the great body of

catholic Israel. We are convinced that Judaism is a thoroughly social and corporate religion. We cannot recognize as adequately Jewish the religion of any soul that is not possessed through and through with the sense of belonging to a definite religious Jewish body. We value most highly historical continuity, for we feel that whilst Judaism may pass through many changes, all this is a result of genuine growth and vital development from phase to phase. We desire to swim in the main stream of Jewish history. There is a great stream of religious tradition running through the centuries which forms the historical embodiment and manifestation of the fundamental Jewish tradition and outlook. Within that tradition we desire to live our spiritual life, and its atmosphere we would breathe. We want to cleave fast to the deepest religious convictions of traditional Judaism, even when we find it necessary to modernize radically their intellectual expression. And we would never abandon or change any of the old ceremonies, symbols, or forms of service, except in so far as the need is clearly proved. So much on the conservative side.

Yet we have the forward-looking gaze. We wish to see a development in Jewish thought and practice. But development to us is not synonymous with reform. We cannot consider any change in Judaism which would mean cutting ourselves away from catholic Israel and severing our connection

with the continuity of Jewish *historical* development. As modern thinking men and women we realize the necessity of harmonizing traditional Judaism with modern thought, and of employing new categories by which the substance of old doctrines are to be stated to the intellectual satisfaction of our generation. As Dr. Hadfield well points out,[1] "the source of power lies not in an instinctive emotion alone, but in an instinctive emotion expressed in a way with which the whole man can, for the time being at least, identify himself. Ultimately, this is impossible without the achievement of a harmony of *all* the instincts and the approval of the reason."

We wish to have a "reasoned sympathy" with Judaism. In the words of one writer, "The man who has looked all the facts in the face, and emerged at length into the light of a glorious certainty, he is the man who can afford to lay down his life for the cause. For him sacrifice is no leap in the dark; he knows it is infinitely worth while. He has no misgivings that all will turn out to be a dream. Reason is no more a traitorous guide. She is his trusted ally. With her help he has seen the ground of faith, he has found the map of life; joyfully now will he become the servant and guide of those who are still wandering in the trackless wilderness."

Finally, we are prepared to agree that the right of every congregation to worship as it pleases is indisputable as a maxim of civil society, but surely

[1] *The Spirit*, edited by B. H. Streeter, p. 93.

this right of judgment must depend upon the pains taken by the congregation to arrive at its decision by adequate and earnest inquiry. We realize how absurd and impious it is for each of us to go off into his separate hole and corner and there exercise his own private judgment. No man can evolve a satisfactory religion solely out of his own inner consciousness. We feel, therefore, if traditional Judaism is to be successful in this country, there must be union of effort amongst the various congregations working for that end. This is not due to any quasi-political scheme, but is the result of the deep passionate longing of many hearts.

Our hope for union lies not in repressing variations, but in making them non-essential, so that this synthesis and unity should cause no difficulty to congregations which have no particularly deep or serious grounds for divergence. Furthermore, we feel this desire for unity not merely on account of our dislike of heterogeneity, but owing to our irritation at the narrow parochialism and cliquishness, at the spectacle of innumerable little ineffective groups where we ought to have breadth of vision and union of effort.

As we look back over history, we note that many of the great revivals of religion have been preceded by a "renaissance," a deeper understanding of the meanings of the past, a more glowing realization of the powers of man, and humble recognition that mankind needs deeper faith in an Almighty God.

We sincerely pray, therefore, that the recent developments in Palestine, and the revival of an interest in Hebrew and Hebrew culture, may mean also a deeper understanding and higher appreciation of the true spirit of Judaism and Jewish thought.

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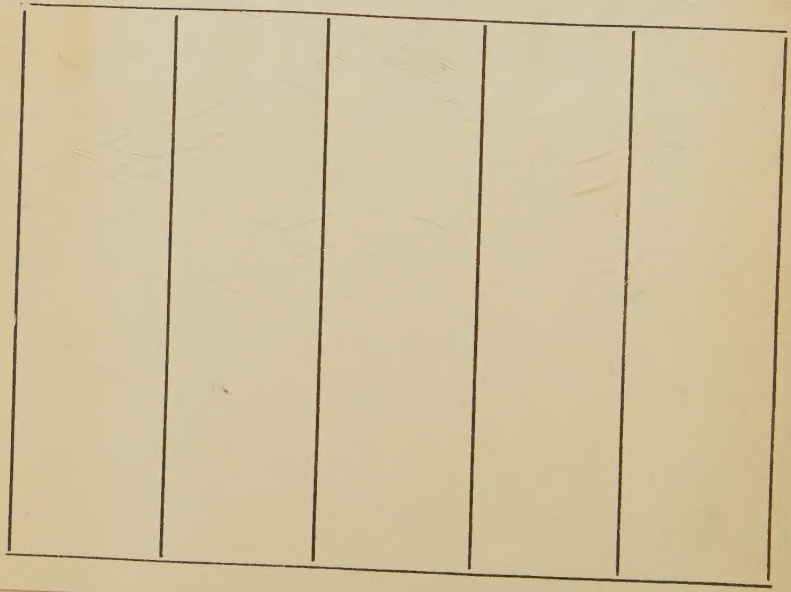

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